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SPEECH

OF

MR. BENTON, OF MISSOURI,

ON

THE OREGON QUESTION.

DELIVERED

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, MAY 22, 25, & 28, 1846.

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The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA



Queen's University at Kingston

THE OREGON QUESTION.

The bill to protect the rights of American settlers in the Oregon Territory being under consideration, and the pending question being to refer the bill to the Committee on the Judiciary, with instructions—

Mr. BENTON addressed the Senate. Mr. President, (said he,) the bill before the Senate proposes to extend the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the United States over all our territories west of the Rocky Mountains, without saying what is the extent and what are the limits of this territory. This is wrong, in my opinion. We ought to define the limits within which our agents are to do such acts as this bill contemplates, otherwise we commit to them the solution of questions which we find too hard for ourselves. This indefinite extension of authority, in a case which requires the utmost precision, forces me to speak, and to give my opinion of the true extent of our territories beyond the Rocky Mountains. I have delayed doing this during the whole session, not from any desire to conceal my opinions, (which, in fact, were told to all that asked for them,) but because I thought it the business of negotiation, not of legislation, to settle these boundaries. I waited for negotiation: but negotiation lags while events go forward; and now we are in the process of acting upon measures, upon the adoption of which it may no longer be in the power either of negotiation or of legislation to control the events to which they may give rise. The bill before us is without definition of the territory to be occupied. And why this vagueness in a case requiring the utmost precision? Why not define the boundaries of these territories? Precisely because we do not know them! And this presents a case which requires me to wait no longer for negotiation, but to come forward with my own opinions, and to do what I can to prevent the evils of vague and indefinite legislation. My object will be to show, if I can, the true extent and nature of our territorial claims beyond the Rocky Mountains, with a view to just and wise decisions; and in doing so, I shall endeavor to act upon the great maxim, "Ask nothing but what is right—submit to nothing that is wrong."

It is my ungracious task, in attempting to act upon this maxim, to commence by exposing error at home, and endeavoring to clear up some great mistakes under which the public mind has labored.

It has been assumed for two years, and the assumption has been made the cause of all the Oregon excitement in the country, that we have a dividing line with Russia, made so by the convention of

1824, along the parallel of $54^{\circ} 40'$, from the sea to the Rocky Mountains, up to which our title is good. This is a great mistake. No such line was ever established; and so far as proposed and discussed, it was proposed and discussed as a northern British, and not as a northern American line. The public treaties will prove there is no such line; documents will prove that, so far as $54^{\circ} 40'$, from the sea to the mountains, was ever proposed as a northern boundary for any Power, it was proposed by us for the British, and not for ourselves.

To make myself intelligible in what I shall say on this point, it is necessary to go back to the epoch of the Russian convention of 1824, and to recall the recollection of the circumstances out of which that convention grew. The circumstances were these: In the year 1821 the Emperor Alexander, acting upon a leading idea of Russian policy (in relation to the North Pacific ocean) from the time of Peter the Great, undertook to treat that ocean as a close sea, and to exercise municipal authority over a great extent of its shores and waters. In September of that year, the Emperor issued a decree, bottomed upon this pretension, assuming exclusive sovereignty and jurisdiction over both shores of the North Pacific ocean, and over the high seas, in front of each coast, to the extent of one hundred Italian miles, from Behring's Straits down to latitude fifty-one, on the American coast, and to forty-five on the Asiatic; and denouncing the penalties of confiscation upon all ships, of whatsoever nation, that should approach the coasts within the interdicted distances. This was a very startling decree. Coming from a feeble nation, it would have been smiled at: coming from Russia, it gave uneasiness to all nations.

Great Britain and the United States, as having the largest commerce in the North Pacific ocean, and as having large territorial claims on the northwest coast of America, were the first to take the alarm and to send remonstrances to St. Petersburg against the formidable ukase. They found themselves suddenly thrown together, and standing side by side in this new and portentous contest with Russia. They remonstrated in concert, and here the wise and pacific conduct of the Emperor Alexander displayed itself in the most prompt and honorable manner. He immediately suspended the ukase, (which, in fact, had remained without execution,) and invited the United States and Great Britain to unite with Russia in a convention to settle amicably and in a spirit of mutual convenience all the questions between them, and especially their

respective territorial claims on the northwest coast of America. This magnanimous proposition was immediately met by the two Powers in a corresponding spirit; and, the ukase being voluntarily relinquished by the Emperor, a convention was quickly signed by Russia with each Power, settling, so far as Russia was concerned, with each, all their territorial claims in Northwest America. The Emperor Alexander had proposed that it should be a joint convention of the three Powers—a tripartite convention—settling the claims of each and of all at the same time; and if this wise suggestion had been followed, all the subsequent and all the present difficulties between the United States and Great Britain, with respect to this territory, would have been entirely avoided. But it was not followed: an act of our own prevented it. After Great Britain had consented, the non-colonization principle—the principle of non-colonization in America by any European Power—was promulgated by our Government, and for that reason Great Britain chose to treat separately with each Power, and so it was done.

Great Britain and the United States treated separately with Russia, and with each other; and each came to agreements with Russia, but to none among themselves. The agreements with Russia were contained in two conventions, signed nearly at the same time, and nearly in the same words, limiting the territorial claim of Russia to $54^{\circ} 40'$, confining her to the coast and islands, and leaving the continent, out to the Rocky Mountains, to be divided between the United States and Great Britain, by an agreement between themselves. The Emperor finished up his own business, and quit the concern. In fact, it would seem, from the promptitude, moderation, and fairness with which he adjusted all differences both with the United States and Great Britain, that his only object in issuing the alarming ukase of 1821 was to bring those Powers to a settlement; acting upon the homely, but wise maxim, that short settlements make long friends.

These are the circumstances out of which the British and American conventions grew with Russia in the years 1824–25. They are public treaties, open to all perusal, and eminently worthy of being read. I will read the third article of each—the one which applies to boundaries—and which will confirm all that I have said. The article in the convention with the United States is in these words:

“ART. 3. It is moreover agreed, that, hereafter, there shall not be formed, by the citizens of the United States, or under the authority of the said States, any establishment upon the northwest coast of America, nor in any of the islands adjacent, to the north of fifty-four degrees and forty minutes of north latitude; and that, in the same manner, there shall be none formed by Russian subjects, or under the authority of Russia, south of the same parallel.”

This is the article which governs the American boundary with Russia, confined by its precise terms to the islands and coasts, and having no manner of relation to the continent. The article in the British convention with Russia, governing her boundary, is in the same words, so far as the limit is concerned, and only more explicit with respect to the continent. Like our own, it is the third article of the convention, and is in these words:

“ART. 3. The line of demarcation between the possessions of the high contracting parties, upon the coast of the continent, and the islands of America, to the northwest, shall

be drawn in the manner following: Commencing from the southernmost point of the island called Prince of Wales Island, which point lies in the parallel of $54^{\circ} 40'$ north latitude, and between 131st and 133d degree of west longitude, (meridian of Greenwich,) the said line shall ascend to the north along the channel called Portland Canal, as far as the point of the continent, where it strikes the 56th degree of north latitude. From this last-mentioned point, to the point of intersection of the 141st degree of west longitude, will prove to be at the distance of more than ten marine leagues from the ocean. The limit between the British possessions and the line of coast which is to belong to Russia, as above mentioned, shall be formed by a line parallel to the windings of the coast, and which shall never exceed the distance of ten marine leagues therefrom. And the line of demarcation shall follow the summit of the mountains situated parallel to the coast, as far as the point of intersection of the 141st degree of west longitude, (of the same meridian;) and, finally, from the said point of intersection, the said meridian line of the 141st degree, in its prolongation as far as the Frozen Ocean, shall form the limit between the Russian and British possessions on the continent of America to the northwest.”

These are the proofs, these the conventions which established limits on the northwest coast of America between the United States and Russia in 1824, and between Great Britain and Russia in 1825. They are identical in object and nearly in terms; they grow out of the same difficulties and terminate in the same way. By each the Russian claim is confined to the coast and the islands; by each the same limit is given both to the United States and Great Britain; and that limit was fixed at the south end of an island, to the latitude of which (supposed to be in 55° , but found to be in $54^{\circ} 40'$) the Emperor Paul had granted the privileges of trade to the Russian American Fur Company. It was a limit wholly in the water, not at all on the land. The American line never touches land, the British only reaches it by going north through Portland Canal to 56° , and thence to pursue the coast at ten leagues from it northwardly to 61° , and thence due north to the Frozen Ocean; leaving to the Russians only the projecting part of the continent which approaches Asia, and narrows the ocean into the strait which Behring found, and which bears his name. This is the Russian line on the continent with Great Britain; the United States have no continental line either with Russia or Great Britain.

I have shown you the limits established with Russia in 1824; I have produced the treaties which established them; and here also is a map which illustrates them, and shows everything precisely as I have read it from the treaties. It is a map of Mr. Greenhow, a clerk in the Department of State, who, so long as he confines himself to the business of copying maps and voyages, does very well; but when he goes to issuing opinions upon national subjects, and setting the world right about the execution or non-execution of a great treaty, as that the line of forty-nine was never established under the treaty of Utrecht—when he goes at this work, the Lord deliver us from the humbug! But here is the map, with the lines all right upon it, drawn in the water and along the coast according to the treaties. First, a few dots in the water at the end of Prince of Wales Island, in latitude $54^{\circ} 40'$; then a dotted line up north, through the middle of Portland Canal, to latitude 56° ; then northwestwardly along the coast, and ten leagues from it, to 61° ; and then north to the Frozen Ocean. No line at all along $54^{\circ} 40'$ to the Rocky Mountains; and that is right, for the treaties never put one there.

And here is another map which illustrates error, and shows you a line on paper where there is none on earth, and of which the Senate has ordered ten thousand extra copies to be printed for the instruction of the people. Here it goes, running straight through from the sea to the mountains, caring for nothing in its course—cutting lakes in two, dividing neighboring posts from each other, and reckless of everything except to follow fifty-four forty. That it pursues with undeviating fidelity; and the engraver has marked it strong on the map, that no one may overlook it. In all this there is but one fault, and that is, that there is no such thing—no such line upon earth! never was, and never can be, by any principle recognised at the time that the Russian convention of 1824 was made.

Well, there is no such line; and that would seem to be enough to quiet the excitement which has been got up about it. But there is more to come. I set out with saying, that although this fifty-four forty was never established as a northern boundary for the United States, yet it was proposed to be established as a northern boundary, not for us, but for Great Britain—and that proposal was made to Great Britain by ourselves. This must sound like a strange statement in the ears of the fifty-four-forties, but it is no more strange than true; and after stating the facts, I mean to prove them. The plan of the United States at that time was this: That each of the three Powers (Great Britain, Russia, and the United States) having claims on the northwest coast of America should divide the country between them, each taking a third. In this plan of partition, each was to receive a share of the continent from the sea to the Rocky Mountains, Russia taking the northern slice, the United States the southern, and Great Britain the centre, with fifty-four forty for her northern boundary, and forty-nine for her southern. The document from which I now read will say fifty-one; but that was the first offer—forty-nine was the real one, as I will hereafter show. This was our plan. The moderation of Russia defeated it. That Power had no settlements on that part of the continent, and rejected the continental share which we offered her. She limited herself to the coasts and islands where she had settlements, and left Great Britain and the United States to share the continent between themselves. But before this was known, we had proposed to her fifty-four forty for the Russian southern boundary, and to Great Britain the same for her northern boundary. I say fifty-four forty; for, although the word in the proposition was fifty-five, yet it was on the principle which gave fifty-four forty—namely, running from the south end of Prince of Wales' Island, supposed to be in fifty-five, but found to have a point to it running down to fifty-four forty. We proposed this to Great Britain. She refused it, saying she would establish her northern boundary with Russia, who was on her north, and not with the United States, who was on her south. This seemed reasonable; and the United States then, and not until then, relinquished the business of pressing fifty-four forty upon Great Britain for her northern boundary. The proof is in the Executive documents. Here it is—a despatch from Mr. Rush, our Minister in London, to Mr. Adams, Secretary of State, dated December 19, 1823:

"I at once unfolded to him (Mr. Canning) the proposals of my Government, which were: 1. That, as regarded the country lying between the Stony Mountains and the Pacific ocean, Great Britain, the United States, and Russia, should jointly enter into a convention, similar in its nature to the third article of the convention of the 20th of October, 1818, now existing between the two former Powers, by which the whole of that country westward of the Stony Mountains, and all its waters, would be free and open to the citizens and subjects of the three Powers as long as the joint convention remained in force. This, my Government proposed, should be for the term of ten years. 2. That the United States were willing to stipulate to make no settlements north of the fifty-first degree of north latitude on that coast, provided Great Britain stipulated to make none south of fifty-one, or north of fifty-five, and Russia to make none south of fifty-five."

Here is the offer, in the most explicit terms, in 1823, to make fifty-five, which was in fact fifty-four forty, the northern boundary of Great Britain; and here is her answer to that proposition. It is the next paragraph in the same despatch from Mr. Rush to Mr. Adams:

"Mr. Canning expressed no opinion on any of these points; but his inquiries and remarks, under that which proposes to confine the British settlements between fifty-one and fifty-five, were evidently of a nature to indicate strong objections on his side, though he professed to speak only from his first impressions. It is more proper, I should say, that his objections were directed to our proposal of not letting Great Britain go above fifty-five north with her settlements, while we allowed Russia to come down to that line with hers. In treating of this coast, he had supposed that Great Britain had her northern question with Russia, as her southern with the United States. He could see a motive for the United States desiring to stop the settlements of Great Britain southward; but he had not before known of their desire to stop them northward, and, above all, over limits conceded to Russia. It was to this effect that his suggestions went."

This was her answer, refusing to take, in 1823, as a northern boundary coming south for quantity, what is now prescribed to her, at the peril of war, for a southern boundary, with nothing north!—for, although the fact happens to be that Russia is not there, bounding us on the north, yet that makes no difference in the philosophy of our Fifty-Four-Forties, who believe it to be so; and, on that belief, are ready to fight. Their notion is, that we go jam up to 54° 40', and the Russians come jam down to the same, leaving no place for the British lion to put down a paw, although that paw should be no bigger than the sole of the dove's foot which sought a resting place from Noah's ark. This must seem a little strange to British statesmen, who do not grow so fast as to leave all knowledge behind them. They remember that Mr. Monroe and his Cabinet—the President and Cabinet who acquired the Spanish title under which we now propose to squeeze them out of the continent—actually offered them six degrees of latitude in that very place; and they will certainly want reasons for this so much compression now, where we offered them so much expansion then. These reasons cannot be given. There is no boundary at 54° 40'; and so far as we proposed to make it one, it was for the British, and not for ourselves; and so ends this redoubtable line, up to which all true patriots were to march! and marching, fight! and fighting, die! if need be! singing all the while, with Horace—

"Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori."

Sweet and decent it is to die for one's country.

And this is the end of that great line! all gone—vanished—evaporated into thin air—and the place where it was, not to be found. Oh! mountain that

was delivered of a mouse, thy name shall henceforth be fifty-four forty! And thus, Mr. President, I trust I have exploded one of the errors into which the public mind has been led, and which it is necessary to get rid of before we can find the right place for our Oregon boundaries.

I proceed to another of the same family—the dogma of the unity and indivisibility of the Oregon title, and its resulting corollary of all or none.

It is assumed by the “*friends of Oregon*” to be all one title, all the way from 42° up to 54° 40'—no break in it; and, consequently, “*all or none*” is the only logical solution which our claim to it can receive. Well, this may be brave and patriotic, but is it wise and true? And can we, with clear consciences, and without regard to consequences, pass a law upon that principle, and send our agents there to execute it? These are the questions which present themselves to my mind, and in answering which I wish to keep before my eyes the first half of the great maxim—*ask nothing but what is right*. I answer, then, that it is not true that our title to what is called all Oregon is one, but several; that it consists of parts, and is good for part, and bad for part; and that nothing just or wise can be determined in relation to it without separating these parts into their proper divisions, and giving to each division the separate consideration and judgment which belongs to it. Thus the title to the Columbia river and its valley was complete before the claim to Frazer’s river and its valley began; and the claim to the islands and coasts rests upon a different state of facts, and a different principle of national law, from that which applies to the continent.

The title to the Columbia river and its valley rests upon discovery and settlement, and was complete before our acquisition of the Spanish title in 1819. The claim to Frazer’s river and its valley, and to the coasts and islands in front of it, began in 1819, and rests upon the discoveries of Spanish navigators; and of these discoveries, the islands and the continent have very different degrees of evidence to exhibit. I mention these differences of title as facts too well known to require documents to prove them; and the bare statement of which should be sufficient to explode the dogma of the unity and indivisibility of the Oregon title. It is not “*all one title*.” It is not good “*for all or none*.” It is not a unity. There are breaks in it; and these breaks are sufficiently large to cover large geographical divisions of the country, and require separate consideration and judgment. That consideration will be given at the proper place; at present I limit myself to the correction of the error, so widely spread over the public mind, that the Oregon title is all one title, from 42° to 54° 40'.

I come to the line of Utrecht, the existence of which is denied upon this floor by Senators whose fate it seems to be to assert the existence of a line that is not, and to deny the existence of one that is. A clerk in the Department of State has compiled a volume of voyages and of treaties, and, undertaking to set the world right, has denied that commissaries ever met under the treaty of Utrecht and fixed boundaries between the British northern and French Canadian possessions in North America. That denial has been produced and accredited on this floor by a Senator in his place, [Mr. Cass;] and this production of a blundering book,

with this Senatorial endorsement of its assertion, lays me under the necessity of correcting a third error which the “*fifty-four forties*” lug to their bosom, and the correction of which becomes necessary for the vindication of history, the establishment of a political right, and the protection of the Senate from the suspicion of ignorance.

I affirm that the line was established; that the commissaries met and did their work; and that what they did has been acquiesced in by all the Powers interested from the year 1713 down to the present time. This is my affirmation; and, in support of it, and without repeating anything said heretofore, I shall produce some new proofs, and take some new positions, the first of which is, that this line was enforced by us (without anything else but the treaty of Utrecht to stand upon) for fifteen years—from 1803 to 1818—as the northern boundary line of Louisiana, and submitted to as such by the British Government; and British traders thereby kept out of our territories west of the Mississippi, while our own treaties let them into our territories on this side of the river. In a word, I will show that this treaty of Utrecht saved us from a calamity for fifteen years, in our new territory of Louisiana, acquired from France, which the treaty of peace of 1783, and Mr. Jay’s treaty of 1784, exposed us to in our old territories of the United States, conquered for us by our fathers in the war of the Revolution. This is my first position, and this is the case which sustains it.

In the year 1803 the United States acquired Louisiana, and with it became a party to all the treaties which concerned the boundaries of that province. The treaty of Utrecht was one of these, and the parallel of forty-nine one of the lines established by it, and governing its northern boundary. We soon had occasion for the protection of that boundary. Spanish connivance and weakness had suffered British traders to invade the whole northern flank of Louisiana, from the Lake of the Woods to the head-waters of the Missouri river; and on our acquisition of that province, we found these traders in the actual possession of the Indian trade throughout all that extensive region. These traders were doing immense mischief among our Indians on this side of the Mississippi, by poisoning their minds and preparing them for war against the United States. The treaty of peace and Mr. Jay’s treaty, under the delusive idea of reciprocity, gave them this privilege of trade in the old territories of the United States. Experience of its evil effects had taught a lesson of wisdom; and, while vainly striving to get rid of the treaty stipulations which admitted these Indians on this side of the Mississippi river, the treaty of Utrecht was eagerly seized upon to expel them from the other. Mr. Greenhow’s compilation was not published at that time, and Mr. Jefferson and his Cabinet, proceeding according to the lights of their little farthing candles, in the absence of that vast luminary, just took the line of forty-nine as the northern boundary of Louisiana, and drove all the British traders to the north of that line.

These traders complained loudly, and appealed to their Government; but the British Ministry, just as much in the dark as Mr. Jefferson and his Cabinet, refused to take official notice of the complaint, only presented it unofficially to the United States Ministers in London, and asked as a favor,

not as a right, the privilege of trading in Louisiana south of 49°. Of course this favor was not granted; and thus British traders were excluded from Louisiana by the treaty of Utrecht, while admitted into the old northwest territory of the Union by virtue of our treaties with Great Britain. The treaty of Utrecht did for us what our own treaties did not. And this was the case from the year 1803, the year of the acquisition of Louisiana, until 1818, the year of concluding the convention with Great Britain which adopted the line of Utrecht as far as the Rocky Mountains. Then, for the first time, the northern line of Louisiana was agreed upon in a treaty between the United States and Great Britain. That convention was an act of supererogation, so far as it followed the line of Utrecht—an act of deep injury so far as it stopped it. The line of 49° was just as well established, and just as well respected and observed, from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains, before that convention as after it. Nay, more; it was the understood line beyond those mountains to the sea, and would itself have settled the Oregon question, and settled it wisely and beneficially if it had only been permitted to remain unmutated.

This is the case. Now for the proofs.

I read extracts from an unofficial communication made by the British Ministers, in 1806, to Messrs. Monroe and Pinckney, our Ministers at that time in London, and by them communicated to our own Government. It is the substance of the complaints of the Canada merchants against the Governor of Louisiana for excluding them from that province, and their application to the British Government to be restored to it. The whole paper is in our State papers of that period, and may there be read at length by any one who desires it:

"Extra official communication with regard to the Canada trade." December 31, 1806.

"A memorial has been presented to Lord Holland and Lord Auckland, on the part of the Canada merchants, setting forth a variety of injuries which they complain of having sustained from the Government and servants of the United States, and praying that their complaints may be attended to, and redress obtained for them in the discussions which are at present pending between the American and British Commissioners.

"The injuries brought forward in their memorial may be reduced to the three following heads: 1. *Their exclusion from Louisiana.*

"By the third article of the treaty of 1794, it is agreed that it shall at all times be free to his Majesty's subjects and the citizens of the United States freely to pass by land or inland navigation into the respective territories and countries of the two parties on the continent of America, and to navigate all the lakes and waters thereof, and freely to carry on trade with each other."

"But, notwithstanding this express stipulation, which secures to his Majesty's subjects, without limitation or reservation, the right of commercial intercourse by land or inland navigation with all the territories of the United States on the continent of America, the Governor of Louisiana has thought proper to exclude them from the commerce of that extensive province, unless they abjure their allegiance to his Majesty, and take an oath of allegiance to the United States; and the same Governor has also taken it upon him to prohibit the introduction of any goods or merchandise which are not the property of citizens of the United States."

"This arbitrary proceeding, besides being a direct violation of the treaty of 1794, is highly detrimental to the private interest of the Canada merchants, for it excludes them from a country where they have been carrying on trade successfully for many years without interruption from the Spaniards, having latterly pushed their commercial posts even to the banks of the Missouri, and augmented the sale of their goods in Louisiana to the amount of about forty or fifty thousand pounds annually."

This is the complaint—exclusion from Louisiana

by the United States Governor of that Province. We took possession of Upper Louisiana in March, 1804; the complaint was made in London in 1806; consequently, the exclusion was enforced very soon after we took possession. The question now is, upon what authority did the Governor act in making this exclusion, and to what line did he extend it? Doubtless by order of his own Government; but it is good to be certain; and in the case of Mr. Greenhow's overshadowing authority, backed as it is by the Senator from Michigan, it becomes necessary to prove everything, even that a Governor of Upper Louisiana had the authority of his Government for the boundaries of his Province. Fortunately, the first Governor of Upper Louisiana was a man of letters as well as of the sword, and employed his leisure hours in drawing up a history of the country which he was sent to govern. It was Major Amos Stoddard, who afterwards lost his life at Fort Meigs during the late war with Great Britain. In his useful work, modestly termed "*Sketches of Louisiana*," he thus speaks of the northern boundary of his Province:

"The commerce of Crozat, by the terms of the patent, extended to the utmost limit of Louisiana in that quarter; which, by the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, was fixed at the 49th degree."

This is Major Stoddard's account of this northern boundary, and of the line from which and by which he excluded British traders from Louisiana. He did it by virtue of the line of Utrecht; and no British Minister in that day did or would deny its existence, or impugn its validity. Lords Holland and Auckland, to whom the complaint of the Canadian merchants was made, refused to present it officially to our Ministers. They do not, in fact, appear to have spoken a word on the subject, or done anything more than present their memorial to our Ministers. Certain it is, the complaint remained without redress.

But the efforts of the British fur traders did not stop at this repulse. The next year the Earl of Selkirk, head of the Hudson Bay Company, went to London to renew the complaints of the fur traders in a more formal manner, and to claim their restoration to the privileges of trade within the limits of Louisiana. That gentleman, as head of the Hudson Bay Company—as founder of the colony on Lake Winipeg—as the person most injured by the exclusion of British traders from Louisiana—ought to know something about his own rights and wrongs; and in bringing these before the British Ministry for redress, ought to be supposed to state his case as strongly as truth and justice will allow. He does so; but not strongly enough to deny the fact of the line of 49° under the treaty of Utrecht. That line was doing him all the mischief: the short remedy was to deny its existence, if it could be denied. On the contrary, he admits the fact of former existence, and only argues against present existence, and present applicability. His argument is, *first*, that the treaty of Utrecht was not revived by the treaty of Amiens, of 1801; and, therefore, that it was abrogated by war; and, *secondly*, that the long occupation of the St. Peter's river, and of the Missouri above the Mandan villages, without objection from the Spaniards, was an admission of their right to trade in Louisiana, and should be conclusive upon the Uni-

ted States. In a memorial to Lord Holland, in 1807, he presents these views at much length, and sustains them by arguments of which these are specimens:

"Understanding that you are at present engaged in settling with the American Plenipotentiaries the boundaries between the province of Louisiana and the British American dominions, I beg leave to call your attention to some suggestions. * * * To the upper part of Missouri, Britain has a preferable claim. About latitude 47, the British traders, coming in from the Hudson Bay territories, maintained a traffic with the Mandan Indians. These traders were the first Europeans who obtained any knowledge of the sources of the Missouri, and they had laid down the course of that river from the Mandans up to the Rocky Mountains, with great minuteness, many years before the journey of Messrs. Lewis and Clarke. The claim of Great Britain to the Upper Missouri country is equally valid, and rests on the same ground as her claim to Nootka Sound, and the country west of the Rocky Mountains, on the Pacific ocean. * * * There are abundance of grounds for denying that there are any rights in the American Government to found its claim on the stipulations of the treaty of Utrecht. * * * The stipulations of the treaty of Utrecht, as to the limits of the Hudson Bay territories, do not bear at all upon the question. The limits fixed by that treaty were for Canada, not Louisiana. * * * Allow me only briefly to observe that the treaty of Utrecht, not having been renewed at the peace of Amiens, would not have been available even to France, if she had remained at peace with us and in possession of Louisiana."

Thus argues the Earl of Selkirk, admitting the fact of boundaries fixed under the treaty of Utrecht, and only arguing against the present existence and applicability of these boundaries. Lord Holland adopted none of these views; he presented the paper, without comment, to the American Ministers, who, in sending it home to their Government, characterized it as an "*idle paper*," and took no further notice of it. It was, in fact, an idle paper, but not quite idle enough, in any sense of the word, to deny the work of the commissaries under the treaty of Utrecht.

But to go on with the proofs.

† In the year 1805, being the second year after the acquisition of Louisiana, President Jefferson sent Ministers to Madrid, (Messrs. Monroe and Charles Pinckney,) to adjust the eastern and southwestern boundaries with her; and, in doing so, the principles which had governed the settlement of the northern boundary of the same province became a proper illustration of their ideas. They quoted these principles, and gave the line of Utrecht as the example; and this to Don Pedro Cevallos, one of the most accomplished statesmen of Europe. They say to him:

"It is believed that this principle has been admitted and acted on invariably since the discovery of America, in respect to their possessions there, by all the European Powers. It is particularly illustrated by the stipulations of their most important treaties concerning those possessions, and the practice under them, viz: the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, and that of Paris in 1763. In conformity with the 10th article of the first-mentioned treaty, the boundary between Canada and Louisiana on the one side, and the Hudson Bay and Northwestern Companies on the other, was established by commissaries, by a line to commence at a cape or promontory on the ocean, in 58° 31' north latitude; to run thence, southwardly, to latitude 49° north from the equator; and along that line indefinitely westward. Since that time, no attempt has been made to extend the limits of Louisiana or Canada to the north of that line, or of those companies to the south of it, by purchase, conquest, or grants from the Indians."

This is what Messrs. Monroe and Charles Pinckney said to Don Pedro Cevallos—a Minister who must be supposed to be as well acquainted with the treaties which settled the boundaries of the late Spanish province of Louisiana as we are with the

treaties which settle the boundaries of the United States. The line of Utrecht, and in the very words which carry it from the Lake of the Woods to the Pacific ocean, and which confine the British to the north, and the French and Spanish to the south of that line, are quoted to Mr. Cevallos as a fact which he and all the world knew. He received it as such; and thus Spanish authority comes in aid of British, French, and American, to vindicate our rights and the truth of history.

Mr. President, when a man is struggling in a just cause, he generally gets help, and often from unforeseen and unexpected quarters. So it has happened with me in this affair of the Utrecht treaty. A great many hands have hastened to bear evidence of the truth in this case; and, at the head of these opportune testimonies, I place the letter of a gentleman who, besides his own great authority, gives a reference to another, who, from his long political position in our country, the powers of his mind, and the habits of his life, happens to be, of all living men, the one who can shed most light upon the subject. I speak of Colonel Timothy Pickering—the friend and companion of Washington—his Quartermaster-General during the war of the Revolution—his Postmaster General, Secretary of War, and Secretary of State, during his Presidency,—a member of this body at the time the treaty was ratified which made us a party to the treaty of Utrecht—and always a man to consider and to understand what he was about. In fact, Washington wanted no other sort of men about him. The writer of the letter, (Timothy Pitkin, author of the work on Statistics,) on reading some account of the talk here about the treaty of Utrecht, and seeing what lack of information was in the American Senate, wrote a letter to a member of this body [Mr. WEBSTER] to give him his memoranda of that treaty some forty years ago. This letter is an invaluable testimony of the events to which it relates; it combines the testimony of two eminent men; and I send it to the Secretary's table to be read. It is dated Utica, New York, April 9, 1846:

"I perceive, by the debates in the Senate on the Oregon question, that, in the decision of this important subject, no little stress is laid by some of its members on the line settled between France and England, under the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, and that by others it is contended that no evidence actually exists that such a settlement was made under that treaty."

"I was somewhat surprised that General Cass should have ventured, in a public speech, to have placed himself among the latter, upon the statements of Mr. Greenhow, a clerk in the Department of State. I have, for a long time, considered that this line was adjusted by commissaries appointed under that treaty; and in reading the speeches of Messrs. Cass and Benton, and your own *significant questions* on the subject, I thought proper to examine my documents and memorandums for some proof of the opinion I had thus formed. On such examination, I found the following extract on this subject, from Mr. Hutchins's 'Historical Narrative and Topographical Description of Louisiana and West Florida,' printed at Philadelphia in 1784.

"After stating the grant to Crozat, of Louisiana, Hutchins, who was then, I believe, geographer to the United States, proceeds to say: 'As to Canada, or New France, the French Court would scarcely admit it had any other northern boundary than the pole. The avidity of Great Britain was equal; but France, having been unfortunate in the war of 1710, the northern boundary of Canada was fixed by the treaty of Utrecht in 1713. It assigns New Britain and Hudson's Bay, on the north of Canada, to Great Britain; and commissioners afterwards, on both sides, ascertained the limits, by an imaginary line running from a cape or promontory in New Britain, on the Atlantic ocean, in fifty-eight degrees thirty minutes north latitude; then southwest

'to the Lake Misgasing, or Mistassin; from thence further southwest direct to the latitude of forty-nine degrees. All the lands to the north of the imaginary line being assigned to Great Britain, and all southward of that line, to as far as the river St. Lawrence, to the French. These were, at that time," he adds, 'the true limits of Louisiana and Canada. Crozat's grant not subsisting long after the death of Louis XIV.'

"The above extract is taken from a long communication made to Mr. Jefferson, by Colonel Pickering, on the 18th of January, 1804, when the treaty of Mr. King, and of boundaries, was under consideration; and of course after our purchase of Louisiana. I presume, therefore, it is correct, though relative to King's treaty some difference of opinion existed between Jefferson and Pickering. I have been unable, in this place, to have access to this work of Hutchins; it was, no doubt, well known to Mr. Jefferson.

"I am not able to inform you whether he answered, in writing, the above communication of Colonel Pickering; but from his declarations made to me and others, on the 23d of January, 1806, he then fully believed this line to have been thus settled, in pursuance of the treaty of Utrecht.

"At that time, conversing with me and others, at a dinner party, on the favorite subject of Lewis and Clarke's expedition to the Pacific, he declared, (according to my memorandum made at the time,) 'That by the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, between the English and French, the line between Louisiana and the English country was settled in latitude 49°; and that this was the reason why, in our treaty with the English, in 1783, our northern boundary was placed at the Lake of the Woods, which was in latitude 49°.'

"Not having seen Hutchins mentioned, or referred to in this debate, I have been induced to send you this extract from him, and also my above memorandum, to bring the same to your notice and recollection, (*valeat quantum valere potest*.)"

This is the letter of Mr. Pitkin, with the extracts from Mr. Pickering. It is not the recollection of an old man, but the written down account of what he saw and knew forty years ago, and written down at the time he saw it and knew it. It is full and complete to the point in question. The reference to Hutchins's Historical Narrative, and Topographical Description of Louisiana, is correct. The work is not in our library, but several friends have sent me copies of it from different parts of the United States, and, on comparison, I find Mr. Pickering's extract to be correct to a letter. The reference of Mr. Pitkin to what passed, in his presence, at Mr. Jefferson's table, in 1806, in relation to the Lake of the Woods, recalls a fact which ought to be taught in the schools, to the little girls, in their tiny geographies, instead of being disputed by bearded men in the American Senate. That lake, for a hundred and thirty years, has been a landmark among nations; for more than sixty years—from the date of our national existence—it has been a prominent mark in our national boundaries. The treaty of Utrecht made it so; and he that does not know this great historical incident may find it out by tasting the intellectual crumb which fell from Mr. Jefferson's table in 1806, and which Mr. Pitkin has preserved for a feast this day in the American Senate. Mr. Jefferson's table was one at which something else besides the body was fed. I was never at it but once, and then I sat there five hours, not for the Burgundy, which was, in fact—what a certain American Minister said of the King of Portugal's dinner—"excellent," but for the conversation, which was divine. And now I will say that I saw Mr. Pickering once, and under circumstances to remember him also. It was at the extra session of Congress, in 1813—he a member of the House of Representatives, I a looker-on from the hot and suffocating gallery, better paid for my sufferance than those who are listening to me now. I saw an aged man, always in his seat, always at-

tentive, always respectful. The decorum of his conduct struck me; I inquired his name; it turned out to be one who had been formed in the school of Washington, of whom I knew but little up to that time but through the medium of party watch-words, and of whom I then said, that, if events should ever make me a member of Congress, I should love to imitate the decorum.

The line of Utrecht is termed, by Mr. Pickering, an "imaginary" line. That is correct. It was never run, nor intended to be run, nor possible to be run. The treaty required it to be "determined;" and it was determined by astronomical points and lines and by geographical features—the high lands parting two systems of waters—those of Hudson's Bay and those of the Canadian Lakes. And here I will say that there were two sets of boundaries to be established under this same treaty of Utrecht: one on the north of Canada, which was done as stated within the year limited; the other on the south of Canada, between Acadia and the British colonies on the Atlantic, for which no time was limited, and which was never done. Confounding these two sets of boundaries, one of which was determined and the other not, may have led some minds into error—those minds which cannot apply words to things.

Mr. Pitkin, in this letter, speaks of a long communication made by Colonel Pickering on the 18th of January, 1804, to Mr. Jefferson, when the treaty of Mr. King was under consideration, and after the purchase of Louisiana. Without doubt that was the identical paper transmitted by Mr. Madison to Mr. Monroe, with his official despatch to that Minister of February 14, 1804, as "a paper stating the authority on which the decision of the commissioners under the treaty of Utrecht rests, and the reasoning opposed to the construction making the 49th degree of latitude the northern boundary of Louisiana." I mentioned that paper once before, when it was pretty well cried down by the Senator from Michigan, [Mr. Cass.] I mention it now again, under better auspices, and with hopes of better results. The author is found, and found where he ought to be, among those who feared the effect of rejecting the fifth article of Mr. Rufus King's treaty of 1803. That treaty settled our whole northern boundary with Great Britain, from Passamaquoddy Bay to the Lake of the Woods, and to the head of the Mississippi. The fifth article of it brought the line from the lake, by the shortest course, to the Mississippi; it closed up the long-standing controversy about the course of that line. Now, it happened that the treaty for the purchase of Louisiana was negotiated in Paris about the same time that Mr. King's treaty was negotiated in London, and without his knowledge. The two treaties arrived in the United States together—went to the Senate together, with a strong recommendation from Mr. Jefferson to reject the fifth article of Mr. King's treaty, because the acquisition of Louisiana gave us a new line from the Lake of the Woods which would run clear north of the head of the Mississippi, preventing the British from getting to the river, and thereby rendering nugatory the treaty stipulations of 1783 and 1794 which gave them a right to its navigation.

The maintenance of this new line, which was not only to protect the Mississippi river, but all Louisiana, from British ingressions, was a primary

object of Mr. Jefferson; and for that purpose the rejection of the fifth article of Mr. King's treaty became indispensable. The New England Senators dreaded the loss of the whole treaty if the fifth article was expunged: nine of them voted against the striking out; and it was while this treaty was under consideration in the Senate that Mr. Pickering, one of the nine, communicated this paper to Mr. Jefferson, not at all denying the 49th parallel as the line of Utrecht, but arguing against the construction which would now make that line the northern boundary of Louisiana. The tenor of his argument is not given; possibly the Earl of Selkirk fell upon some parts of it in his memorial to Lord Holland, when he supposed it to be abrogated by war, and superseded by the connivance of the Spaniards, in permitting the British to occupy the whole left flank of Louisiana, as low down in places as 45°. Mr. Jefferson adhered to his new line. The fifth article was struck out. The whole treaty was risked and lost, and it was forty years afterwards, and we all know with what angry discussions, with what dangers of war, with what expense of money in calling out troops, this long contested boundary was at last established. All this was risked, all this was encountered to save the line of Utrecht! Yet we now find that line denied, and all the organs, great and small, blowing with might and main to swell the loud notes of denial, and to drown the voice which speaks up for the truth.

Several copies of Hutchins's geographical work have been sent to me, all containing the words transcribed by Mr. Pickering. Other works also have been sent me. I have more material on hand than I can use, and must limit myself to a brief selection. Among these books sent me is one of special authority—the geographical work of Thomas Jeffreys, Esq., Geographer to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, printed at the corner of St. Martin's Lane, near Charing Cross, London, A. D. 1753. This royal geographer, who would hardly curtail the fair proportions of the dominions to whose heir apparent (afterwards George III.) he was addressing his work, thus speaks of the line which parts the British Hudson Bay and the French Canadian possessions:

"Beginning at Davis's Inlet, on the east coast of Labrador or New Britain, in the latitude of about 56 degrees, and drawing it with a curve through the Lake Abitibi, down to the 49th degree of latitude; from thence to be continued to the Northwest ocean, as it was settled by commissioners under the treaty of Utrecht."

Mr. Jeffreys adds to this description of the line of Utrecht, remarks upon the same line as laid down by D'Anville, the Royal French Geographer, points out what he deems erroneous in it, and takes credit to himself in making it more favorable to the French than the French had made it to themselves. The latitude of 49 to the Western Ocean is his limit of the British possessions.

I have said that more material has been furnished to me than I can use. Among these I must acknowledge the kindness of Mr. Edmund J. Forsyth, of New Orleans, a man of letters, and who sends me a reference to Postlethwayt's Commercial Dictionary, which, in fact, is the dictionary of Savary, Inspector General of French Manufactures and Commerce in the time of Louis the Fifteenth, and whose work was done into English, with improvements, by Mr. Malachy Postlethwayt,

whose name it bears with English readers. This dictionary of Savary contains, in the body of the work, the description of the Utrecht line as shown on the maps, and thus gives authority for what appears there.

Another contribution, which I have pleasure to acknowledge, is from a gentleman of Baltimore, formerly of the House of Representatives, (Mr. Kennedy,) who gives me an extract from the Journal of the British House of Commons, March 5th, 1714, directing a writ to be issued for electing a Burgess in the place of Frederick Herne, Esq., who, since his election, hath accepted, as the Journal says, the office of one of his Majesty's commissaries for treating with commissaries on the part of France for settling the trade between Great Britain and France. The same entry occurs at the same time with respect to James Murray, Esq., and Sir Joseph Martyn. The tenth article of the treaty of Utrecht applies to limits in North America, the eleventh and fifteenth to commerce; and these commissaries were appointed under some or all of these articles. Others might have been appointed by the King, and not mentioned in the journals, as not being members of Parliament whose vacated seats were to be filled. All three of the articles of the treaty were equally obligatory for the appointment of commissaries; and here is proof that three were appointed under the commercial articles.

One more piece of testimony, and I have done. And, first, a little statement to introduce it. We all know that in one of the debates which took place in the British House of Commons on the Ashburton treaty, and after that treaty was ratified and past recall, mention was made of a certain map called the King's map, which had belonged to the late King, (George III.,) and hung in his library during his lifetime, and afterwards in the Foreign Office, from which said office the said map silently disappeared about the time of the Ashburton treaty, and which certainly was not before our Senate at the time of the ratification of that treaty. Well, the member who mentioned it in Parliament said there was a strong red line upon it, about the tenth of an inch wide, running all along where the Americans said the true boundary was, with these words written along it in four places in King George's handwriting: "*This is Oswald's line;*" meaning, it is the line of the treaty of peace negotiated by Mr. Oswald on the British side, and therefore called *Oswald's line*.

Now, what I have to say is this: That whenever this royal map shall emerge from its retreat and resume its place in the Foreign Office, on it will be found another strong red line about the tenth of an inch wide, in another place, with these words written on it: Boundaries between the British and French possessions in America "*as fixed by the treaty of Utrecht.*" To complete this last and crowning piece of testimony, I have to add that the evidence of it is in the Department of State, as is nearly the whole of the evidence which I have used in crushing this *pie-poudre* insurrection—"this puddle-lane rebellion"—against the truth and majesty of history, which, beginning with a clerk in the Department of State, spread to all the organs, big and little; then reached the Senate of the United States, held divided empire in this chamber for four months, and now dies the death of the ridiculous.

I have now got to the end of the errors which I propose to correct at the present time. I have consumed the day in getting ready to speak—in clearing away the rubbish which had been piled up in my path. On another day, if the Senate pleases, I will go to work on the Oregon question, and endeavor to show how far we shall be right, and how far we may be wrong, in exercising the jurisdiction and sovereignty which this bill proposes (which is not a copy of the British act, but goes far beyond it) over an undefined extent of territory, to which we know there are conflicting claims. Light upon this point, at this time, may be of service to our country; and I mean to discharge my duty to her, regardless of all consequences to myself.

Mr. B. then gave way to a motion for adjournment.

MONDAY, May 25, 1846.

MR. BENTON rose and addressed the Senate as follows:

In resuming my speech on this subject, I wish to say, Mr. President, that the bill now before the Senate is not the one recommended by the President of the United States. He recommended that the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the United States be extended to our Oregon territory to the same extent that Great Britain had extended her sovereignty and jurisdiction to the same country. In this recommendation I fully concur; and I venture to say that, if such a bill was brought in, it might pass the Senate (leaving out unnecessary speeches) in as little time as it would require to read it three times by its title. But the bill before the Senate is not of that character. It goes far beyond the President's recommendation. It proposes many things not found in the British act of 1821—things implying exclusive jurisdiction and sovereignty in us, and that to an undefined extent of country, and under circumstances which must immediately produce hostile collisions between our agents and the British agents on the other side of the Rocky Mountains. I am opposed to all this; but I am not in favor of the indefinite postponement of the bill. I wish to see it amended and made conformable to the President's recommendation. If gentlemen who have the conduct of the measure here will bring in such an amendment, and put it on its passage without speeches, I will stop my speech until it is passed.

I will now proceed to show, as well as I can, the degree and extent of our just claims beyond the Rocky Mountains.

To understand what I mean to say, it is necessary to recollect the geography of the country in question, and see it presenting, as it does, three distinct geographical divisions, to each of which a different claim and a different degree of claim attaches, and which cannot be confounded under any one general view, without a general mystification and total confusion of the whole subject. The Columbia river and its valley is one of these divisions; the islands along the coast is another; Frazer's river and its valley (called by the British New Caledonia) is the third. Under these three divisions I now propose to speak of the country. Under these divisions I have always spoken of it; and what I have said of one part had no applica-

tion to another. When I spoke of the great river of the West and its valley, either by its American name of Columbia or its Indian name of Oregon, I never intended Frazer's river and its valley, or Vancouver's Island, or the Gulf of Georgia, or Desolation Sound, or Broughton's Arch. When I speak of the coast and the islands, I do not mean the continent and the mountains; and when I speak of Frazer's river or New Caledonia, I do not mean the Columbia river. I repudiate all such loose and slovenly verbiage; and, desiring to be understood according to my words, I go on to speak of the country beyond the Rocky Mountains under the three great geographical divisions into which Nature has formed it, and to which political events have so naturally adapted themselves.

I begin with the islands.

From the Straits of Fuca (in fact from Puget's Sound) to the peninsula of Alaska—a distance of one thousand miles—there is a net-work of islands—an archipelago—some large, some small, checkered in together, and covering the coast to the extent of one, two, and even three hundred miles in front of the continent. They are most of them of volcanic impression, and separated from each other and the continent by deep bays, gulfs, and straits, and by long deep chasms, to which navigators have given the name of canals. This long checker-board of islands, and the waters which contain them, have been the theatre of maritime discovery to many nations, and especially Spanish, British, and Russian; but, except the Russians, no nation made permanent settlements on any of these islands; and they only as low down as latitude 55. The British and Spaniards both abandoned Vancouver's Island after the Nootka Sound controversy; and from that time the Spaniards had no settlement of any kind on the coast, or islands, north of Cape Mendocino, latitude 41°; and the British had none anywhere. In this state of the case the question came on between Russia, Great Britain, and the United States, in which the distinction between the islands and the continent was acknowledged by all the Powers, and Russia excluded from the continent, and confined to the islands, because her discoveries and settlements were not continental, but insular. The convention with Russia (British and American) of 1824-25 were framed upon that principle; and now I proceed to read the instructions from our Government under which this distinction between the islands and the continent was asserted and maintained. I read from Mr. Adams's despatch to Mr. Middleton, July 22d, 1823:

"It never has been admitted, by the various European nations which have formed settlements in this hemisphere, that the occupation of an island gave any claim whatever to territorial possessions on the continent to which it was adjoining. The recognised principle has rather been the reverse; as, by the law of nature, islands must rather be considered as appurtenant to continents, than continents to islands."

And again, in Mr. Middleton's communications to the Russian Government:

"The Russians have an establishment upon the island of Sitka, in latitude 57° 30'. This fort, built in 1799, was destroyed three years after by the natives of the country, and re-established in 1804 by Mr. Lisianski, who called it New Archangel. Russia cannot, however, avail herself of the circumstance of that possession to form a foundation for rights on the continent, the usage of nations never having established that the occupation of an island could give rights upon a neighboring continent. The principle is, rather, that

the islands ought to be considered as appendant to the continent, than the inverse of the proposition."

These were the instructions to our Minister, under which we treated with Russia in 1824, and upon which the conventions of that period were formed. They establish the fact that these islands in front of the northwest coast were considered a separate geographical division of the country, governed by national law applicable to islands; and that discoveries among them, even perfected by settlement, gave no claims upon the continent. This is the way the two Powers settled with Russia. Applying the same principle to themselves, and no discovery of Vancouver's Island, or any one of the thousand islands along that coast, can give any territorial claims on the continent. I have considered it a cardinal error, in all the recent discussions on Oregon, to bottom continental claims upon these insular discoveries. The Spaniards, as so well shown in the speech of the Senator from New York, [Mr. Dix,] were the predecessors of the British in these discoveries; but I did not understand him as claiming the continent out to the Rocky Mountains, and up to 54° 40', by virtue of these maritime discoveries; and I am very sure that I limited my own sanction of his views to the tracks of the ships which made the discoveries. I consider Spanish discoveries along that coast as dominant over the British, both for priority of date and for the spirit of ownership in which they were made. The Spaniards explored as masters of the country, looking after their own extended and contiguous possessions, and to which no limit had ever been placed: the British explored in the character of adventurers, seeking new lands in a distant region. Neither made permanent settlements; both abandoned; and, now, I see nothing, either in the value or the title of these islands, for the two nations to fight about. The principle of convenience and mutual good will, so magnanimously proposed by the Emperor Alexander in 1823, seems to me to be properly applicable to these desolate islands, chiefly valuable for harbors, which are often nothing but volcanic chasms, too deep for anchorage and too abrupt for approach. In the discussions of 1824, so far as they were not settled, they were considered appurtenant to the continent, instead of the continent being held appurtenant to them; and the reversal of this principle, I apprehend, has been the great error of the recent discussions, and has led to the great mistake in relation to Frazer's river. I dismiss the question, then, as to this geographical division of the country, with saying that our title to these islands is better than that of the British, but that neither is perfect for want of settlement; and that now, as proposed in 1824, they should follow the fate of the continental divisions in front of which they lie.

Frazer's river and its valley, known in northwestern geography as New Caledonia, is the next division of the disputed country to which I shall ask the attention of the Senate. It is a river of about a thousand miles in length, (following its windings,) rising in the Rocky Mountains, opposite the head of the Unjigah, or Peace river, which flows into the Frozen ocean in latitude about 70. The course of this river is nearly north and south, rising in latitude 55, flowing south to near latitude 49, and along that parallel, and just north of it, to the Gulf of Georgia, into which it falls behind Van-

couver's Island. The upper part of this river is good for navigation; the lower half, plunging through volcanic chasms in mountains of rock, is wholly unnavigable for any species of craft. This river was discovered by Sir Alexander Mackenzie in 1793, was settled by the Northwest Company in 1806, and soon covered by their establishments from head to mouth. No American or Spaniard had ever left a track upon this river or its valley. Our claim to it, as far as I can see, rested wholly upon the treaty with Spain of 1819; and her claim rested wholly upon those discoveries among the islands, the value of which, as conferring claims upon the continent, it has been my province to show in our negotiations with Russia in 1824. At the time that we acquired this Spanish claim to Frazer's river, it had already been discovered twenty-six years by the British; had been settled by them for twelve years; was known by a British name; and no Spaniard had ever made a track on its banks. New Caledonia, or Western Caledonia, was the name which it then bore; and it so happens that an American citizen, a native of Vermont, respectfully known to the Senators now present from that State, and who had spent twenty years of his life in the hyperborean regions of Northwest America, in publishing an account of his travels and sojournings in that quarter, actually published a description of this New Caledonia, as a British province, at the very moment that we were getting it from Spain, and without the least suspicion that it belonged to Spain! I speak of Mr. Daniel Harmon, whose Journal of Nineteen Years' Residence between latitudes 47 and 53 in Northwestern America, was published at Andover, in his native State, in the year 1820, the precise year after we had purchased this New Caledonia from the Spaniards. * I read, not from the volume itself, which is not in the library of Congress, but from the London Quarterly Review, January No., 1822, as reprinted at Boston; article, WESTERN CALEDONIA.

"The descent of the Peace river through a deep chasm in the Rocky Mountains first opened a passage to the adventurers above mentioned into the unexplored country behind them, to which they gave the name of New Caledonia—a name, however, which, being already occupied by the Australasians, might advantageously be changed to that of *Western Caledonia*. This passage lies in latitude 58° 30'. MacKenzie had crossed the Rocky chain many years before in latitude 54½, and descended a large river flowing to the southward, named Taconche Tessé, which he conceived to be the Columbia; but it is now known to empty itself about Birch's Bay of Vancouver, in latitude 49°; whereas the mouth of the Columbia lies in 45° 15'. Another river, called the Caledonia, (Frazer's river,) holding a parallel course to the Taconche Tessé, (Columbia,) falls into the sea near the Admiralty Inlet of Vancouver, in latitude 48°, and forms a natural boundary between the new territory of Caledonia and the United States, falling in precisely with a continued line on the same parallel with the Lake of the Woods, and leaving about two degrees of latitude between it and the Columbia. Its northern boundary may be taken in latitude 57°, close to the southernmost of the Russian settlements. The length, therefore, will be about 553, and the breadth, from the mountains to the Pacific, from 330 to 350 geographical miles.

"The whole of this vast country is in fact so intersected with rivers and lakes, that Mr. Harmon thinks one-sixth part of its surface may be considered as water. The largest of the latter yet visited is named Stuart's lake, and is supposed to be about 400 miles in circumference. A post has been established on its margin in latitude 54° 30' north, longitude 125° west. Fifty miles to the westward of this is Frazer's lake, about eighty or ninety miles in circumference: here, too, a post was established in 1805. A third, of sixty or seventy miles in circumference, has been named

McLeod's lake, on the shore of which a fort has been built in latitude 55° north, longitude 124° west. The waters of this lake fall into the Peace river; those flowing out of the other two are supposed to empty themselves into the Pacific, and are probably the two rivers pointed out by Vancouver, near Pont Eslington, as we had occasion to observe in a former article. The immense quantity of salmon which annually visit these two lakes, leave no doubt whatever of their communication with the Pacific; and the absence of this fish from McLeod's lake, makes it almost equally certain that its outlet is not into that ocean. The river flowing out of Stuart's lake passes through the populous tribes of the Naito-at-tains, who say that white people come up in large boats to trade with the A-ta-aas, (a nation dwelling between them and the sea,) which was fully proved by the guns, iron pots, cloth, tar, and other articles found in their possession.

Most of the mountains of Western Caledonia are clothed with timber trees to their very summits, consisting principally of spruce and other kinds of fir, birch, poplar, aspen, cypress, and, generally speaking, all those which are found on the opposite side of the Rocky Mountains. The large animals common to North America, such as buffalo, elk, moose, reindeer, bears, &c., are not numerous in this new territory; but there is no scarcity of the beaver, otter, wolverine, marten, foxes of different kinds, and the rest of the fur animals, any more than of wolves, badgers, and polecats; fowls, also, of all the descriptions found in North America, are plentiful in Western Caledonia; cranes visit them in prodigious numbers, as do swans, bustards, geese, and ducks."

This is the account given by Mr. Harmon of New Caledonia, and given of it by him at the exact moment that we were purchasing the Spanish title to it! Of this Spanish title, of which the Spaniards never heard, the narrator seems to have been as profoundly ignorant as the Spaniards were themselves; and made his description of New Caledonia as of a British possession, without any more reference to an adverse title than if he had been speaking of Canada. So much for the written description: now let us look at the map, and see how it stands there. Here is a map—a 54° 40' map—which will show us the features of the country, and the names of the settlements upon it. Here is Frazer's river, running from 55° to 49°, and here is a line of British posts upon it, from Fort McLeod, at its head, to Fort Langley, at its mouth, and from Thompson's Fork, on one side, to Stuart's Fork on the other. And here are clusters of British names, imposed by the British, visible everywhere—Forts George, St. James, Simpson, Thompson, Frazer, McLeod, Langley, and others: rivers and lakes with the same names, and others: and here is Deserter's Creek, so named by Mackenzie, because his guide deserted him there in July, 1793; and here is an Indian village which he named Friendly, because the people were the most friendly to strangers that he had ever seen; and here another called Rascals' village, so named by Mackenzie fifty-three years ago, because its inhabitants were the most rascally Indians he had ever seen; and here is the representation of that famous boundary line 54° 40', which is supposed to be the exact boundary of American territorial rights in that quarter, and which happens to include the whole of New Caledonia, except McLeod's fort, and the half of Stuart's lake, and a spring, which is left to the British, while we take the branch which flows from it. This line takes all in—rivers, lakes, forts, villages. See how it goes! Starting at the sea, it gives us, by a quarter of an inch on the map, Fort Simpson, so named after the British Governor Simpson, and founded by the Hudson Bay Company. Upon what principle we take this British fort I know not—except it be on the assumption that our sacred right and title being ad-

justed to a minute, by the aid of these 40 minutes, so appositely determined by the Emperor Paul's charter to a fur company in 1799, to be on this straight line, the bad example of even a slight deviation from it at the start should not be allowed even to spare a British fort away up at Point McIntyre, in Chatham Sound. On this principle we can understand the inclusion, by a quarter of an inch on the map, of this remote and isolated British post. The cutting in two of Stuart's lake, which the line does as it runs, is quite intelligible: it must be on the principle stated in one of the fifty-four-forty papers, that Great Britain should not have one drop of our water; therefore we divide the lake, each taking their own share of its drops. The fate of the two forts, McLeod and St. James, so near to each other and so far off from us, united all their lives, and now so unexpectedly divided from each other by this line, is less comprehensible; and I cannot account for the difference of their fates, unless it is upon the law of the day of judgment, when, of two men in the field, one shall be taken and the other left, and no man be able to tell the reason why. All the rest of the inclusions of British establishments which the line makes, from head to mouth of Frazer's river, are intelligible enough: they turn upon the principle of all or none!—upon the principle that every acre and every inch, every grain of sand, drop of water, and blade of grass in all Oregon, up to fifty-four forty, is ours! and have it we will.

This is the country which geography and history five-and-twenty years ago called New Caledonia, and treated as a British possession; and it is the country which an organized party among ourselves of the present day call "*the whole of Oregon or none*," and every inch of which they say belongs to us. Well, let us proceed a little further with the documents of 1823, and see what the men of that day—President Monroe and his Cabinet—the men who had made the treaty with Spain by which we became the masters of this large domain: let us proceed a little further, and see what they thought of our title up to fifty-four forty. I read from the same document of 1823:

Mr. Adams to Mr. Middleton, July 22, 1823.

"The right of the United States, from the forty-second to the forty-ninth parallel of latitude on the Pacific ocean we consider as unquestionable, being founded, first, on the acquisition by the treaty of 22d February, 1819, of all the rights of Spain; second, by the discovery of the Columbia river, first from the sea at its mouth, and then by land by Lewis and Clarke; and, third, by the settlement at its mouth in 1811. This territory is to the United States of an importance which no possession in North America can be of to any European nation, not only as it is but the continuity of their possessions from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, but as it offers their inhabitants the means of establishing hereafter water communications from the one to the other."

FORTY-NINE, Mr. President, FORTY-NINE! TO THAT LINE, AND THAT FOUR YEARS AFTER THE ACQUISITION OF THE SPANISH CLAIM, WAS OUR UNQUESTIONABLE RIGHT HELD TO EXTEND; FIFTY-ONE WAS THE HIGHEST DEBATABLE LINE NAMED, AND THAT NAMED ON A PRINCIPLE KNOWN TO BE ERRONEOUS, AND READY TO BE GIVEN UP.

AGAIN:

Mr. Adams to Mr. Rush. Same date.

"By the treaty of amity, settlement, and limits, between the United States and Spain, of 22d February, 1819, the boundary line between them was fixed at the forty-second degree of latitude, from the source of the Arkansas river to

the South sea. By which treaty the United States acquired all the rights of Spain north of that parallel.

"The right of the United States to the Columbia river, and to the interior territory washed by its waters, rests upon its discovery from the sea and nomination by a citizen of the United States; upon its exploration to the sea, made by Captains Lewis and Clarke; upon the settlement of Astoria, made under the protection of the United States, and thus restored to them in 1813; and upon this subsequent acquisition of all the rights of Spain, the only European Power who, prior to the discovery of the river, had any pretensions to territorial rights on the northwest coast of America.

"The waters of the Columbia river extend, by the Multnomah, to the 42d degree of latitude, where its source approaches within a few miles of those of the Platte and Arkansas; and by Clarke's river to the 50th or 51st degree of latitude; thence descending, southward, till its sources almost intersect those of the Missouri."

"To the territory thus watered, and immediately contiguous to the original possessions of the United States, as first bounded on the Mississippi, they consider their right to be now established by all the principles which have ever been applied to European settlements upon the American hemisphere."

This is an extract of great value, and is an amplification and development of the principle laid down in the extract just read. It recites the Spanish treaty of 1819, and claims nothing under it beyond the Columbia and its valley. To this our title is alleged to be complete, on American grounds, independent of the treaty, namely, discovery, settlement, and colonization by Mr. Astor, under the protection of the United States:

AGAIN:

Mr. Adams to Mr. Rush. Same despatch.

"If the British Northwest and Hudson Bay Companies have any posts on the coast, as suggested in the article in the Quarterly Review above cited, the third article of the convention of the 20th of October, 1818, is applicable to them. Mr. Middleton is authorized to propose an article of similar import, to be inserted in a joint convention between the United States, Great Britain, and Russia, for a term of ten years from its signature. You are authorized to make the same proposal to the British Government; and, with a view to draw a definite line of demarcation for the future, to stipulate that no settlement shall hereafter be made on the northwest coast, or on any of the islands thereto adjoining, by Russian subjects, south of latitude 55; by citizens of the United States north of latitude 51; or by British subjects either south of 51 or north of 55.

"I mention the latitude of 51, as the bound within which we are willing to limit the future settlement of the United States, because it is not to be doubted that the Columbia river branches as far north as 51, although it is most probably not the Taconeschee Tes-é of Mackenzie. As, however, the line already runs in latitude 49 to the Stony Mountains, should it be earnestly insisted upon by Great Britain, we will consent to carry it in continuance, on the same parallel, to the sea. Copies of this instruction will likewise be forwarded to Mr. Middleton, with whom you will freely but cautiously correspond on this subject, as well as in regard to your negotiation respecting the suppression of the slave trade."

Four things must strike the attention in this extract: 1. The offer of a partnership to the Emperor Alexander, which he wisely refused. 2. The offer of the same to Great Britain, which she sagaciously accepted. 3. The offer of 55° to Great Britain as her permanent northern boundary. 4. The offer of 51° to her as a permanent southern boundary, and its offer on a principle not valid, with the alternative to fall back upon the line of 49°. The British, who know all this, and a great deal more, must be astonished at our fifty-four-decay war fever of to-day!

AGAIN:

Mr. Rush to Mr. Adams.

"LONDON, December 22, 1823.

"In an interview I had with Mr. Canning last week, I made known to him, as preparatory to the negotiation, the

views of our Government relative to the northwest coast of America. These, as you know, are:

"First. That, as regards the country westward of the Rocky Mountains, the three Powers, viz: Great Britain, the United States, and Russia, should jointly agree to a convention, to be in force ten years, similar in its nature to the third article of the convention of October, 1818, now subsisting between the two former Powers; and secondly, that the United States would stipulate not to make any settlements on that coast north of the fifty-first degree of latitude, provided Great Britain would stipulate not to make any south of 51° or north of 55°; and Russia not to make any south of 55°.

"Mr. Canning expressed no opinion on the above propositions further than to hint, under his first impressions, strong objections to the one which goes to limit Great Britain northwards to 55°. His object in wishing to learn from me our propositions at this point of time, was, as I understood, that he might better write to Sir Charles Bagot on the whole subject to which they relate."

AGAIN:

Same to same, December 19, 1823.

"And secondly, that the United States were willing to stipulate to make no settlements north of the 51st degree of north latitude on that coast, provided Great Britain stipulated to make none south of 51° or north of 55°; and Russia to make none south of 55°."

AGAIN:

Same to same, same date.

"That they (the United States) were willing, however, to waive for the present the full advantage of these claims, to forbear all settlements north of 51, as that limit might be sufficient to give them the benefit of all the waters of the Columbia river; but that they would expect Great Britain to abstain from coming south of that limit or going above 55; the latter parallel being taken as that beyond which it was not imagined that she had any actual settlements."

On Friday, Mr. President, I read one passage from the documents of 1823, to let you see that fifty-four forty (for that is the true reading of fifty-five) had been offered to Great Britain for her northern boundary: to-day I read you SIX PASSAGES from the same documents, to show the same thing. And let me remark once more—the remark will bear eternal repetition—these offers were made by the men who had acquired the Spanish title to Oregon! and who must be presumed to know as much about it as those whose acquaintance with Oregon dates from the epoch of the Baltimore Convention—whose love for it dates from the era of its promulgation as a party watchword—whose knowledge of it extends to the luminous pages of Mr. Greenhow's book!

Six times Mr. Monroe and his Cabinet renounced Frazer's river and its valley, and left it to the British! They did so on the intelligible principle that the British had discovered it, and settled it, and were in the actual possession of it when we got the Spanish claim; which claim Spain never made! Upon this principle, New Caledonia was left to the British in 1823. Upon what *principle* is it claimed now?

This is what Mr. Monroe and his Cabinet thought of our title to the whole of Oregon or none, in the year 1823. They took neither branch of this proposition. They did not go for all or none, but for some! They took some, and left some; and they divided by a line right in itself, and convenient in itself, and mutually suitable to each party. This President and his Cabinet carry their "unquestionable right" to Oregon as far as 49, and no further. This is exactly what was done six years before. Mr. Gallatin and Mr. Rush offered the same line, as being a continuation of the line of Utrecht, (describing it by that name in their despatch of Octo-

ber 20th, 1818,) and as covering the valley of the Columbia river, to which they alleged our title to be indisputable. Mr. Jefferson had offered the same line in 1807. All these offers leave Frazer's river and its valley to the British, because they discovered and settled it. All these offers hold on to the Columbia river and its valley, because we discovered and settled it; and all these offers let the principle of contiguity or continuity work equally on the British as on the American side of the line of Utrecht.

This is what the statesmen did who made the acquisition of the Spanish claim to Oregon in 1819. In four years afterwards they had freely offered all north of 49 to Great Britain; and no one ever thought of arraigning them for it. Most of these statesmen have gone through fiery trials since, and been fiercely assailed on all the deeds of their lives; but I never heard of one of them being called to account, much less lose an election, for the part he acted in offering 49 to Great Britain in 1823, or at any other time. For my part, I thought they were right then, and I think so now; I was Senator then, as I am now. I thought with them that New Caledonia belonged to the British; and thinking so still, and acting upon the first half of the great maxim—Ask nothing but what is right—I shall not ask them for it, much less fight them for it now.

I come now to the third geographical division of the contested country, purposely reserved for the last, because it furnishes the subject for the application of the second half of the great maxim: Submit to nothing that is wrong. I come to the river Columbia, and its vast and magnificent valley. I once made a description of it, with an anathema against its alienation. I described it by metes and bounds—by marks and features—and then wrote its name in its face. The fifty-four forties got hold of my description—rubbed out the name—obliterated the features—expanded the boundaries—took in New Caledonia, and all the rivers, lakes, bays, sounds, islands, valleys, forts, and settlements, all the way up to 54 40! and then turned my own anathema against myself, because *their* minds could not apply words to things. Well! I take no offence at this. There are some people too simple to get angry with. All we do with them in the West is, to have them "cut for the simples;" after which they are cured. They can perform this operation for themselves, or have it done. If by themselves, all they have to do is rub their eyes, and read again: if by others, the operator must read, and caution the listening patient to stick the word to the thing.

The valley of the Columbia is ours: ours by discovery, by settlement, and by the treaty of Utrecht! and has too often been so admitted by Great Britain, to admit of her disputing it now. I do not plead our title to that great country. I did that twenty years ago, when there were few to repeat or applaud what I said. I pass over the ground which I trod so long ago, and which has been again so much trodden of late, and take up the question at a fresh place—the admissions of Great Britain! and show that she is concluded by her own acts and words from ever setting up any claim to the river and valley of the Columbia, or to any part of the territory south of the 49th degree.

I begin with Mr. Astor's settlement on the Co-

lumbia, and rest upon it as a corner-stone in this new edifice of argument against Great Britain. What was that settlement? Not a mere trading post, for temporary traffic, down in a corner, and without the knowledge of nations or the sanction of his own Government. On the contrary, it was the foundation of a colony, and the occupation of the whole valley of the Columbia, and the establishment of a commercial emporium, of which the mouth of the river was the seat, and the Rocky Mountains on one hand and Eastern Asia on the other were the outposts. Great Britain saw it without objection—the United States with approbation; and every circumstance which proclaimed and legitimated a national undertaking signalized and commemorated its commencement, existence, and overthrow.

It was in the year 1810—four years after the return of Lewis and Clarke's expedition—that Mr. Astor, with the enlarged and comprehensive views of a "*merchant prince*," projected from the western shore of the Atlantic this great establishment on the eastern coast of the Pacific Ocean. A ship commanded by an officer of the United States navy, freighted with everything necessary for the foundation of a colony, sailed from New York to double Cape Horn: an overland expedition of ninety men, led by a gentleman of New Jersey, proceeded from St. Louis to cross the Rocky Mountains. In the spring of 1811 the two expeditions met at the mouth of the Columbia, and immediately proceeded to fulfil the intentions of the bold projector of the enterprise. Astoria was founded: its dependant post, the Okenakan, was established six hundred miles up the river: the Spokane, another dependant, was established two hundred miles higher up, and at the base of the mountains: a third, the Wahlamath, was established upon the river of that name, two hundred and fifty miles southeast of Astoria. Parties of traders and hunters covered all the waters of the Columbia river from head to mouth; fleets of batteaus, carrying up merchandise and bringing down furs, had their regular arrival and departure from Astoria. Two more ships arrived from New York. Canton, the Sandwich Islands, New Archangel, the coast of California, were visited by Mr. Astor's ships. The Pacific Fur Company was in full tide of success. Astoria became the centre of an extended trade: her name became known to the world. This was notice to the world that an American colony was being founded on the Columbia, and no Power in the wide world objected to it. It was before the Spanish treaty of 1819, and Spain did not object. It was after all the pretended claims of Great Britain, as now set up, and she did not object. Special notice had previously been given to the Minister of Great Britain, and he had nothing to say against it. Special notice had already been given to the Northwest Company, and they invited to join in the enterprise as traders, which they refused to do, because it was an American enterprise. Far from objecting to the settlement, they sent a special agent across the continent to stipulate with Mr. Astor's agents that they should confine themselves to the valley of the Columbia, which arrangement was made. Special notice was given to our own Government, its sanction obtained, and its protection solicited; and if protection, in the full sense of the word, was

not promised, it was because it was felt to be impossible to send troops and ships there, in the event of the war, to prevent its falling into the hands of the British; but that it was to be protected, in the general sense of the word, was promised, as was proved at Ghent when peace came to be made.

Two years passed off in this way; Great Britain made no objection; her agent, the Northwest Company, agreed to our occupation of the whole valley; and acquiescence, under these circumstances, becomes an admission of American title which forever closes the mouth of Great Britain.

In this manner the Columbia was settled by Mr. Astor; in this manner it was held by him for two years. Now for the manner in which it fell into the hands of Great Britain. Two years had elapsed from the time of the foundation of Astoria, when intelligence arrived at that place with the news of war between the United States and Great Britain, and information of a departure of a ship of war from London to join the squadron under Commodore Hillyar, in the Pacific Ocean, and proceed to capture Astoria as an important American colony. At the same time several partners of the Northwest Company arrived at Astoria, confirmed the information of the British designs on the post, and offered to purchase all the stock on hand, goods and furs, of Mr. Astor, as the only means of preventing them from becoming a prize to a British squadron. The agents of Mr. Astor sold under this duress, receiving the fourth or fifth part of what the property was worth. Soon after a ship of war from Commodore Hillyar's squadron arrived, took possession of the post without opposition, but with all the formalities of a British conquest, and with great chagrin to the officers at the loss of their expected booty. This is the manner in which the British got possession of Astoria, and with it the whole valley of the Columbia. As a British conquest they took it; as such they agreed to restore it under the treaty of Ghent. And thus, at the settlement of Astoria, and the occupation of the whole valley of the Columbia, the British Government, by its silent acquiescence, admitted our *unquestionable* right to it. By seizing it as a British conquest, they admitted our right again. By agreeing to restore it under the treaty of Ghent, they admitted it a third time—three times in five years; and this ought to be enough, in all conscience, to preclude present claims, founded on previous stale and vague pretensions.

Now for the proof of all that I have said.

I happen to have in my possession the book, of all others, which gives the fullest and most authentic details on all the points I have mentioned, and written at a time and under circumstances when the author (himself a British subject, and familiar on the Columbia) had no more idea that the British would lay claim to that river than Mr. Harmon, the American writer whom I quoted, ever thought of our claiming New Caledonia. It is the work of Mr. Franchère, a gentleman of Montreal, with whom I have the pleasure to be personally acquainted, and one of those employed by Mr. Astor in founding his colony. He was at the founding of Astoria; at the sale to the Northwest Company; saw the place seized as a British conquest; and remained three years afterwards in the

country, in the service of the Northwest Company. He wrote in French: his work has not been done into English, though it well deserves it, and I read from the French text. He first gives a brief and true account of the discovery of the Columbia. He says:

"In 1792, Captain Gray, commanding the ship *Columbia*, of Boston, discovered the entrance of a large bay in 46 degrees 19 minutes of north latitude. He entered it; and finding, by the fresh water which he found at a little distance from its mouth, that it was a large river, he ascended it eighteen miles, and cast anchor upon the left bank, at the entrance of a deep bay. He there drew up a chart of what he had discovered of this river and of the neighboring country; and after having trafficked with the natives, (the object for which he came upon these coasts,) he regained the sea; and soon after met Captain Vancouver, who was sailing under the orders of the British Government in search of discoveries. Captain Gray made known to him the discovery which he had made, and even communicated the chart of it which he had drawn up. Vancouver sent his first lieutenant, Broughton, who ascended the river 118 miles; took possession of it in the name of his Britannic Majesty; gave it the name of *Columbia*, and to the bay where Captain Gray had stopped the name of *Gray's Bay*. Since this period the country has been much frequented, especially by Americans."

"This brief and plain account of the discovery of the Columbia is valuable for showing—*first*, that we discovered the river; *secondly*, that we showed it to British navigators; and, *thirdly*, that one of those to whom we showed it immediately claimed it as British property. We shall soon see that the British Government, or its agents in these parts, the Northwest Company, gave no attention to this claim of Mr. Broughton, so little creditable to his candor and justice. Vancouver, like a man of honor, never claimed Captain Gray's discovery, but assigned to him the entire credit of it, with thanks for his communication of it to himself.

The design of Mr. Astor's establishment is thus spoken of:

"Mr. John Jacob Astor, merchant of New York, who carried on alone the trade in furs to the south of the great Lakes Huron and Superior, and who had acquired by this commerce a prodigious fortune, believed he could yet augment this fortune by forming, on the banks of the Columbia, an establishment, of which the entrepôt should be at its mouth. He communicated his views to the agents of the Northwest Company; he wished even to make this establishment in concert with them; but, after some negotiations, the wintaring partners (*les propriétaires hivernants*) having rejected his propositions, Mr. Astor determined to make the attempt alone. It was essential to his success that he should have persons long accustomed to trade with the Indians, and he did not delay to find them. Mr. Alexander McKay, (the same who had accompanied Sir Alexander Mackenzie in his voyages,) a man bold and enterprising, joined him, and, soon after, Messrs. Duncan McDougall, Donald Mackenzie, (heretofore in the service of the Northwest Company,) David Stuart, and Robert Stuart, all of Canada, did the same. Finally, in the winter of 1810, Mr. Wilson Price Hunt, of St. Louis, on the Mississippi, having also joined them, they determined that the expedition should take place the following spring."

This shows a direct communication of Mr. Astor's design to the Northwest Company, and of their refusal to act in concert with him, because of the American character of the enterprise; also the reason why he employed many Canadians in his service; it was for the sake of having experienced traders to assist in conducting his business. It shows also that, among other Canadian gentlemen, he had employed Mr. Alexander McKay, the faithful companion of Sir Alexander Mackenzie in his expedition to the Pacific ocean in 1793. This gentleman knew where Mackenzie's discoveries were, and whether Mr. Astor was about to trespass upon

them. This, then, was the time to speak: on the contrary, the companion of Mackenzie goes on to assist in laying the foundation of the American colony on the Columbia!

Mr. Franchère proceeds:

"It is well to state that, during our sojourn in New York, and before leaving that city, Mr. McKay believed it would be prudent to see Mr. Jackson, the Minister Plenipotentiary of his Britannic Majesty, in order to inform him of the object for which he was about to embark, and to ask his advice as to what he should do in case of a rupture between the two Powers, intimating to him that we were all British subjects and that we were going to trade under the American flag. After some moments' reflection, Mr. Jackson said to him, 'that we were going to form a mercantile establishment at the risk of our lives; that all he could promise us was, that, in case of a war between the two Powers, we should be respected as British subjects and traders.' This answer appeared satisfactory, and Mr. McKay believed he had nothing more to fear from that quarter."

This was in the year 1810—seventeen years after the discoveries of Mackenzie, and eight years after Mr. Broughton took possession of the Columbia in the name of his Britannic Majesty; and at this time, the Minister of Great Britain, on a special communication made to him of Mr. Astor's design to occupy the Columbia, has not a word to say against it. Up to that time, it had not occurred to the British Government that the Columbia river was theirs!

The ship *Tonquin*, carrying the maritime part of the expedition, arrived at the mouth of the Columbia March 25th, 1811. The approach to the coast revealed nothing but lofty ranges of mountains, white with snow, through a gap of which the great river of the West entered the sea. The weather was bad—the night dark—two boats had been swamped—no pilots, lights, or buoys—yet the captain (a rash man, who afterwards blew up his ship at Nootka) entered safely, and anchored at midnight in a commodious harbor. On the 12th of April, after examining both sides of the bay for the best situation, a site was chosen on the south side, about four or five leagues from the sea, and the foundation of Astoria began—a name in itself the badge of American title. On the 15th of July, the young Astoria received an important visit, which is thus described:

"All was ready at the day appointed, (for an expedition to the interior,) and we were preparing to load the canoes, when, towards mid-day, we saw a large canoe, carrying a flag, which was rounding the point called by us *Tongue Point*. We were ignorant who they might be, for we did not look so soon for our people, who (as the reader may remember) were to cross the continent by the route which Captains Lewis and Clarke had followed in 1805, and winter for this purpose on the banks of the Missouri. Our uncertainty was soon banished by the nearing of the canoe, which landed near a little quay which we had built to facilitate the unloading of our vessel. The flag which this canoe carried was the British flag; and her crew amounted to only nine persons in all. A man, quite well dressed, and who appeared to command, leaped first to the shore, and accosting us without ceremony, told us that he was named David Thompson, and was one of the proprietors of the Northwest Company. We invited him to ascend to our lodging, which was in one end of the shed, our house not yet being finished. After the usual hospitalities, Mr. Thompson told us that he had crossed the continent during the preceding winter; but that the desertion of a part of his men had obliged him to winter at the foot of the mountains near the head of the Columbia river; that in the spring he had built a canoe and had come to our establishment. He added that the proprietors wintering in them had resolved to abandon all the posts which they had west of the mountains, rather than enter into competition with us, on condition that we would promise not to trouble them in the trade on the eastern side; and to

sustain what he said he produced a letter to Mr. William McGillivray to the same effect.

"Mr. Thompson kept, as it seemed to me, a regular journal, and travelled rather as a geographer than a trader in furs: he had a good quadrant; and during a sojourn of eight days, which he made at our establishment, he had occasion to make several astronomical observations."

This was a visit of great moment in the history of Astoria, and in the consideration of the British claim to the Columbia, which has lately been brought forward. Mr. Thompson was one of the Northwest Company, its astronomer, a gentleman of science and character, to whom we are greatly indebted for fixing important geographical positions in the interior of North America. He had crossed the continent from Montreal simultaneously with Mr. Astor's land expedition from St. Louis, but in a higher latitude, and arrived a few days before it. He came to the Columbia to give the information to Mr. Astor's agents that the Northwest Company, to avoid competition with them, would abandon all their establishments west of the Mountains, provided Mr. Astor would not interfere with them on the east. This proposal was agreed to. The valley of the Columbia was left to the free enjoyment of the Americans; and the extension of posts to the mountains went on without question according to the original intention. The Northwest Company, at that time, no more than the British Government, had happened yet to take it into its head that the Columbia river, or any part of it, was British property.

Mr. Astor's agents proceeded to the establishment of interior posts, and the dispatch of parties to hunt and trade up the Columbia to the mountains. The Okanakan, about six hundred miles up, on the north side of the river, and at the mouth of the river of that name, was the most considerable, and was remarkable for being the nearest to the British establishments in New Caledonia; for by that name the valley and district of Frazer's river was then known; and that was ten years before Mr. Harmon published his book. The Spokane, two hundred miles higher up, and on the south side, was established at the same time. The post on the Wahlamath, two hundred and fifty miles southeast from Astoria, was established the next year, and of all these establishments Mr. Franchère gives a particular account, which it is not necessary to read here. The country was, at the same time, completely penetrated by parties of traders and hunters, up to the head-waters of Clark's river, and of Lewis's river, and into the Rocky Mountains. Two years everything had gone on without interruption, when two events occurred, in communicating which I will use Mr. Franchère's own words:

"The 15th of January, 1813, Mr. Mackenzie arrived from his establishment, which he had abandoned after having *caché* a part of his effects. He came to announce to us that war had been declared between Great Britain and the United States. This news had been brought to his post by some gentlemen belonging to the Northwest Company, who had given him a letter containing the President's proclamation to that effect.

"On learning this news we strongly desired, that is, all of us at Astoria who were English and Canadians, to see ourselves in Canada; but we could not even permit ourselves to think of it, at least at present—we were separated from our country by an immense space, and the difficulties of travel were insurmountable at this season. We held then a sort of council of war, and, after having thoroughly weighed the crisis in which we found ourselves, after having con-

sidered seriously that although we were almost all British subjects, we nevertheless traded under the American flag, and that we could not expect assistance, all the ports of the United States being probably blockaded, we decided to abandon the establishment by the following spring, or in the beginning of summer at furthest. We did not tell our *engagés* of this resolve, for fear that they might abandon their work at once, but we stopped trading with the natives from that moment, as much because we were not provided with a large supply of merchandise, as that we had more furs than we could carry away."

Here is an important fact stated, that of hearing of the war and despairing of protection from the United States. The agents of Mr. Astor, upon full consultation, determined to abandon the country.

Mr. Franchère continues:

"Some days after Mr. Mackenzie's departure, we perceived, to our great surprise, at the extremity of Tongue Point, two canoes carrying the British flag, and between them another bearing that of America. It was Mr. Mackenzie himself, who was returning with Messrs. J. G. McTavish and Angus Bethune, of the Northwest Company. He had met these gentlemen near the Rapids, and had determined to return with them to the establishment, in consequence of the news which they had given him. They were on light canoes, having left behind them Messrs. John Stuart and McMillan, with a brigade of eight canoes loaded with furs.

"Mr. McTavish came up to our lodging, and showed us a letter which had been written to him by Mr. A. Shaw, one of the agents of the Northwest Company. This gentleman announced to him in the letter that the ship *Isaac Todd* had sailed from London in March, in company with the frigate *Phœbe*, and that they were coming by order of the Government to take possession of our establishment—this establishment being represented to the Lords of the Admiralty as an important colony founded by the American Government.

"The eight canoes which had been left behind having joined the first, a camp of nearly seventy-five men was formed at the little bay near our establishment. As they were without provisions, we furnished them with what they needed; nevertheless we kept on our guard, for fear of some surprise from them, for we were much inferior to them in number.

"The season advancing, and their vessels not arriving, caused them to find their situation very disagreeable; without provision, and without merchandise to procure any of the natives, who looked on them with any evil eye, having good hunters but wanting ammunition. Tired of recurring incessantly to us for provisions, they proposed that we should sell them our establishment and its contents. Placed in the situation in which we were, in the daily expectation of seeing an English man-of-war appear to take away what we possessed, we listened to their propositions. We had several consultations; the negotiations grew wearily long; at length they agreed on the price of the furs and merchandise, and the treaty was signed by both parties on the 23d of October. The gentlemen of the Northwestern Company took possession of Astoria, having agreed to pay to each of the servants of the *ci-devant* Pacific Fur Company (a name chosen by Mr. Astor) the amount of their wages in full, deducted from the price of the goods we delivered to them, to feed them, and to furnish a passage gratis to those among them who wished to return to Canada.

"It was thus, that after having crossed seas and endured all sorts of fatigues and privations, I lost, in an instant, all my hopes of fortune. I could not prevent myself from remarking, that we should not look for such treatment from the British Government, after the assurances we had received from his Majesty's Minister before we left New York. But as I have just said, the value of our trading-post had been much exaggerated to the Ministers; for if they had known it, they surely would not have taken offence at it, at least would not have judged it worthy of a maritime expedition."

This is the manner in which the effects of Mr. Astor passed into the hands of the Northwest Company; this the manner in which they became installed in the valley of the Columbia. It was a purchase of goods and furs, and of the buildings which contained them, and nothing more. No one was childish enough to suppose that the sov-

ereignty of the country was or could have been transferred as an appurtenance to the skins and blankets. We will now see how the British Government obtained possession of the country:

"The 15th of November, 1813, Messrs. Alexander Stuart and Alexander Henry, both proprietors in the Northwest Company, arrived at the establishment in two bark canoes, manned by sixteen voyageurs. These gentlemen had left Fort William, on Lake Superior, in July. They lent us some Canadian newspapers, by which we learned that the British arms had up to that time kept the ascendancy. They also confirmed the news that an English frigate was to come and take our *ci-devant* establishment; they were even very much surprised not to see the *Isaac Todd* in the harbor.

"On the morning of the 30th, we perceived a vessel which was doubling Cape Disappointment, and which soon anchored in Baker's Bay. Not knowing if it was a friendly vessel or otherwise, we thought it prudent to send to it in a canoe Mr. McDougall, with those of the men who had been in the service of the *ci-devant* P. F. C., with the injunction to call themselves Americans if the ship was American, and English if it was the contrary. Whilst they were on their way, Mr. McTavish had all the furs which were marked with the name of the Northwest Company packed upon two barges which were at the fort, and remounted the river to Tongue Point, where he was to wait for a signal which we had agreed upon. Towards midnight Mr. Halsey, who had accompanied Mr. McDougall to the vessel, returned to the fort, and announced to us that it was the British sloop *Rackoon*, of 23 guns, and 120 men in her crew, Captain Black commanding. Mr. John McDonald, proprietor in the Northwest Company, had come as passenger in the *Rackoon*, accompanied by five *engagés*. This gentleman had left England in the frigate *Phœbe*, which had sailed with the *Isaac Todd* as far as Rio Janeiro. Having rejoined there an English squadron, the Admiral had given them for convoy the sloops *Rackoon* and *Cherub*. These four vessels had sailed in company to Cape Horn, where they had separated after having agreed to meet at the island of Juan Fernandez. The three vessels of war did go there; but, after having waited a long time in vain for the *Isaac Todd*, Commodore Hillyar, who commanded this little squadron, having learned that the American Commodore Porter was doing great damage to the English commerce, especially among the whalers which frequented these seas, he resolved to go and find him and give battle; giving to Captain Black orders to go and destroy the American establishment of the Columbia river. Consequently, Mr. McDonald and his men had embarked on the *Rackoon*. This gentleman told us that they had endured the most terrible weather in doubling Cape Horn. He thought that if the *Isaac Todd* had not slackened at some spot it would arrive in the river within a fortnight. At the agreed signal, Mr. McTavish returned to Astoria with his furs, and learned with much pleasure the arrival of Mr. McDonald.

"The first of December, the barge of the corvette came to the fort Astoria with McDonald, and the first lieutenant, named Sheriff. As there were on the *Rackoon* goods for the Northwest Company, a boat was sent to Baker's Bay to bring them to the fort; but the weather was so bad and the wind so violent, that she did not return till the 12th with the goods, bringing also with Captain Black five marines and four sailors.

"We regaled our hosts with as much splendor as was possible. After dinner the Captain had firearms given to the company's servants; and we repaired, thus armed, to a platform by which had been erected a flag-staff. There the Captain took a British flag, which he had brought for the purpose, and had it hoisted to the top of the staff; and then taking a bottle full of Madeira, he broke it on the staff, declaring in a loud voice that he took possession of the establishment and the country in the name of his British Majesty; and he changed the name of Astoria to that of Fort George. The Indian chiefs had been assembled to witness this ceremony, and I explained to them in their own language what it meant. They fired three discharges of artillery and musket shot, and the health of the King was drank according to the received customs in such cases.

"The vessel finding itself detained by contrary winds, the Captain had an exact survey made of the mouth of the river and the channel between Baker's Bay and Fort George. The officers came frequently to see us, and appeared to me generally to be very much discontented with their voyage; they had expected to meet several American

vessels loaded with rich furs, and had calculated beforehand their share in the taking of Astoria. They had met nothing, and their astonishment was at its height when they saw our establishment had been transferred to the Northwest Company, and was under the British flag. It will be sufficient to quote Captain Black's expression to show how much they were mistaken with regard to us. This Captain landed in the night; when we showed him the palisades of the establishment in the morning, he asked if there was not another fort; and having learnt there was not, he cried out, with an air of the greatest astonishment, 'What! is this the fort represented to me as formidable? Good God! I could batter it down with a four pounder in two hours.'

"The greater part of the Pacific Fur Company's servants engaged themselves to the Northwest Company. Some others preferred returning to their country, and I was among the latter. Nevertheless, Mr. McTavish having intimated to me that my services would be needed at the establishment, I engaged myself for the space of five months, that is to say, until the setting out of the party which was to ascend the river in the spring, to go to Canada, by way of the Rocky Mountains and the rivers of the interior. Messrs. John Stuart and Mackenzie left at the end of the month, the last to deliver over to the first the trading posts which had been established in the interior by the before-mentioned company."

This is the way the British got possession of the Columbia—as a conquest—accompanied by all the circumstances of a national act. The Lords of the Admiralty in London, charged with the naval operations of the war, plan the expedition, and plan it against the colony of Mr. Astor, and against it as an important American colony. They despatch a ship of war from London to join a squadron in the Pacific to attack the colony. A ship from the squadron arrives; finds the goods and furs sold; is enraged at the loss of the booty, but finds the American sovereignty of the country remaining in the form of a little fort; takes possession of it as a British conquest; runs up the British flag; christens it in a bottle of rum; and agents are sent off to the Okenakan, the Spokane, and Wahlamath, to deliver up the dependant posts, and with them the whole valley of the Columbia: as a conquest the British took it; as a conquest they held it; as a conquest they agreed to restore it under the Ghent treaty. And here I will answer a question which has been put to me: Does the right of restoration extend to the whole valley of the Columbia river, or only to the post at the mouth of the river? I answer, the whole valley; and, to parley about anything less is to suffer ourselves to be bamboozled and disgraced.

I here cease my readings from Mr. Franchère, satisfied that, upon his testimony, I have made out the fullest and most authentic case of unqualified British admissions, BY ACTS, of our title to the Columbia. To these admissions by acts I will now add admissions by words. For it so happens that at the time of the negotiations of 1823, at the time we were offering fifty-five to the British for a northern boundary, and fifty-one for a southern, the parallel of forty-nine was the most southern one to which her claims extended. This was understood and agreed upon by both parties in 1818, 1820, and 1823; and here is the evidence of it in documents of unimpeachable authority. I read first from Mr. Adams to Mr. Rush, July 22d, 1823:

"Previous to the restoration of the settlement at the mouth of the Columbia river in 1818, and again upon the first introduction in Congress of the plan for constituting a territorial government there, some disposition was manifested by Sir Charles Bagot and Mr. Canning (Minister at Washington) to dispute the right of the United States to that establishment, and some vague intimation was given of Brit-

ish claims on the northwest coast. The restoration of the place, and the convention of 1818, were considered as a final disposal of Mr. Bagot's objections; and Mr. Canning declined committing to paper those which he had intimated in conversation."

Two dates and a great fact are here mentioned, with both of which I was contemporary, and, my writings of the time will prove, not an inattentive observer. The nominal restoration of the Columbia, which was, in fact, an empty ceremony, and the non-execution of the Ghent treaty, in favor of the west, as it had happened before in the non-execution of treaties, which required British western posts to be given up. That is one date. The introduction of Dr. Floyd's Oregon bill in the House of Representatives, in 1820-'21, is another of those dates, and of which I know something. The great fact is, and my speech of 1824 will show that I knew something of that, is the vague intimation of British claims to the Columbia at that time, the refusal of the Minister to write them down, and their utter and entire abandonment!

This was done expressly by Mr. Canning, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, to Mr. Rush, in London, in 1823, of which Mr. Rush's despatch of the 19th January, 1824, bears witness. Here it is:

"It was an omission in me not to have stated in my communication of the 6th instant what are to be the claims of Great Britain on the northwest coast of America, though as yet Mr. Canning has not made them known to me formally. She will claim, I understand, to a point northwards above 55, though how much above it I am not now able to say, and southwards as low down as 49. Whether she designs to push a claim to the whole of this space with earnestness, I am also unable as yet to say, but wait the more full and accurate disclosure of her views."

THUS, ON THE 19TH DAY OF JANUARY, IN THE YEAR 1824, THE PARALLEL OF FORTY-NINE WAS THE FURTHEST SOUTH TO WHICH THE BRITISH MINISTER, MR. CANNING—A MINISTER OF HEAD, AND OF FORTY YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS—PROPOSED TO PUSH THE BRITISH CLAIM.

After this authentic and express admission of Mr. Canning, the Prime Minister of Great Britain in 1824, it is hardly excusable to have recourse to secondary or inferior testimony, however persuasive or convincing that testimony may be. But I have still a piece of British testimony in hand sufficiently respectable to be quoted after Mr. Canning, and sufficiently coincident in time and terms to identify the Minister's answer with public opinion at the time, that the extent of the British claims stated to Mr. Rush in January, 1824, was the opinion of the public as well as of the Minister. It is found in the London Quarterly Review, October number, 1822. It is in discussing the boundaries of New Caledonia, for which he proposes on the south the line of the Lake of the Woods to the sea:

"Another river, called the Caledonia, (Frazer's,) holding a parallel course to the Tacoutche Tesse, (Columbia,) falls into the sea near the Admiralty Inlet of Vancouver, in latitude 48, and forms a natural boundary between the new territory (Western Caledonia) and that of the United States, and falling in precisely with a continued line with the same parallel with the Lake of the Woods, and leaving about two degrees of latitude between it and the Columbia."

So said the Quarterly Review in January, 1822, No. 72, article "Western Caledonia."

I sat out to establish, upon the admissions of Great Britain herself, our right to the Columbia river and its valley. I have done more. I have

established her admission to the line of 49, giving us near three degrees on the coast, the valuable waters about the Straits of Fuca and Puget's Sound, and the whole Olympic district, no part of all which is in the valley of the Columbia.

We thus see that, in 1824, the British Government, by authentic acts, and by the language of Mr. Canning, admitted our right to the river and valley of the Columbia; and, what was better, limited their claim to 49. At the same time we see that our Government was offering 49; so that the two Governments were of accord, and the question is, why they did not agree? The documents furnish the answer to this question, and a strange answer it is. Nothing else than a love of partnerships, and a desire to go into partnership with Russia and Great Britain in the use of all the country beyond the Rocky Mountains, each enjoying the use of the whole in common with the others, and the title to remain in abeyance. The Emperor of Russia, like a wise man, declined all share in this mixed concern, got his own part laid off to himself, and has enjoyed it ever since in peace and quietness. The British Government, like another wise man, accepted our proposal, went into partnership with us, took the use of the whole to herself, and now claims it as her own. We were the only unwise in the transaction, and our improvidence, so visible to everybody now, seen only by myself then, evidently resulted from the underestimate of the country, which was then so universal. By our proposal of partnership, we prevented the settlement of the boundary, and put a Power stronger than ourselves in possession of our property—a Power which has kept it so long that it begins to dream that it is its own; and now we are raising fleets and armies, and preparing to set the four corners of the world on fire, to get him out again. I had had the vanity to denounce it the day I first heard of it, in the year 1818, and thought I was doing something. I even published my denunciation in articles which I deemed quite sensible, and expected to make a great sensation. On the contrary, not one responsive note was obtained from the thousand newspapers which the United States contained; and I found myself as solitary then in advance of the public as I am now behind it.

I trust that I have made good our title, and that upon British admissions, to the Columbia river and its valley, modified by the line of Utrecht. Up to that line, if it becomes necessary, I am willing to fight; but, before fighting, I want to talk—to talk understandingly, with a knowledge of the subject—and to talk righteously, with the great maxim before me: Ask nothing but what is right—submit to nothing that is wrong. Upon this principle I have now spoken, whether wisely, it is not for me to say; but it is not newly—it is not new talk with me. Twenty-eight years ago, I wrote what I now speak. Eighteen years ago, and when I had already been eight years a member of this body, I submitted a resolution in relation to this Oregon question, which I have seen no reason to retract or modify since that time, and which may stand for the text of my speech this day. It was in these words:

“Resolved, That it is not expedient for the Government of the United States to treat with his Britannic Majesty in ref-

erence to their territorial claims and boundaries west of the Rocky Mountains, upon the basis of a joint occupation by the citizens of the United States and subjects of Great Britain of the country claimed by each Power.

“Resolved, That it is expedient for the Government of the United States to treat with his Britannic Majesty in reference to their said claims and boundaries, upon the basis of a separation of interests, and the establishment of the 49th degree of north latitude as a permanent boundary between them, in the shortest possible time.”

It was in the session of 1827-'28, and before the ratification of the second partnership convention—the one we are now determined to get rid of even at the price of war—and with the view of preventing the ratification of that convention, that this resolution was submitted. It presented my view of the settlement of this question, namely, no partnerships, the immediate establishment of a boundary, and the 49th parallel for that boundary. They are my views now; and, having said enough against partnerships, and enough in favor of settling upon some line, I go on to give my reasons in favor of that of forty-nine.

It is the line which parts, more suitably than a line following their high lands could do it, the valleys of the Columbia and of Frazer's river, saving to us all our discoveries and settlements beyond the Rocky Mountains, and leaving to the British the whole of theirs. It is a continuation of the line on this side of the mountains—a line which happens to conform to the geographical features of the continent on this side of the mountains, and equally so on the other. On this side, it parts the two systems of waters, one of which belongs to the valley of the Mississippi, and the other to the basin of Hudson's Bay; on the other side, it parts the system of waters which belong to the valley of the Columbia from those which belong to Frazer's river, cutting off the heads of a few streams, of about equal value on each hand. It is the line of Utrecht—a line which will now be denied but by few—and to which few nothing more on this point will ever be said by me. It is the line of right, resulting from the treaty of Utrecht; and as such always looked to, in the early stages of this controversy, both by British and American statesmen, as the ultimate line of settlement and boundary between the countries. It is the line of right, resulting from the said treaty of Utrecht, up to which Mr. Adams, in his despatch to Mr. Middleton, of July 19, 1823, alleged an “unquestionable title” to extend; for only upon that treaty could a line of “unquestionable title” be averred. On any other basis, it could only be a line of convention—a conventional line of mutual agreement; and Mr. Adams was not a man to confound two things so different in their nature. It is the best line for us; for it gives us all the waters of Puget's Sound and Bellingham's Bay—I do not say the Straits of Fuca, (for those straits, like all the other great straits in the world, are part of the high seas, and incapable of self-appropriation by any nation;) it gives us these waters, and with them the picturesque and fertile square, of more than a hundred miles every way, lying between the Straits of Fuca and the Columbia, and between the Pacific coast and the Cascade range of mountains, and of which Mount Olympus, near the centre, is the crowning ornament, and from which the whole district derives its classic name of Olympic.

All this the line of the treaty of Utrecht gives us, which the line of the valley of the Columbia would not; for that river has no valley at its mouth, and enters the sea through a gap in the iron-bound coast. The valley of that river is a fan expanded, the spreading part in the Rocky Mountains, the handle in the sea. It is the best line for the British, for it gives them the upper part of the north fork of the Columbia, where it heads opposite the Athabasca and Saskatchewan—British rivers, and covered by British posts—and from all which the valley of Frazer's river would be cut off from communication if the head of the Columbia remained in our hands, just as Halifax was cut off from Quebec by the northern waters of the St. John's. Thus, the line of right—the line of Utrecht—is the best for both parties, giving to each what is convenient and necessary to it, (for the triangle at the head of the Columbia is as necessary to them as the Olympic square is to us,) and taking from each a detached district, of little value except for annoyance. The British could annoy us in the Olympic district; we could annoy them at the head of the Columbia; but why do it, except upon the principle of laying eggs to hatch future disputes? upon the Machiavelian principle of depositing the seeds of a new contestation while assuming to settle the mischiefs of an old one? Forty-nine is the line which Mr. Jefferson proposed in 1807, as I have shown heretofore to the Senate. It is the line of which Mr. Gallatin and Mr. Rush said in 1818:

"The forty-ninth degree of north latitude had, in pursuance of the treaty of Utrecht, been fixed, indefinitely, as the line between the British northern possessions and those of France, including Louisiana, now a part of our territories. There was no reason why, if the two countries extended their claims westward, the same line should not be continued to the Pacific Ocean. So far as discovery gives a claim, ours to the whole country on the waters of the Columbia river was indisputable."

It is the line of all the American statesmen, without exception, twenty and forty years ago. It was the line of Mr. Canning in 1823. It is the line for the rejection of which by Mr. Pakenham, without reference to his Government, Sir Robert Peel has lately, and publicly, and in the face of the world, expressed regret. It is a line which we have never presented as an ultimatum; which we have often proposed gently, and which the British have as often gently shoved aside, because they saw, from our own coetaneous propositions, that they could do better, and get the whole, at least for a long time, under our own delusive project of joint usufruct. But now all this gentle and delusive work is done with. The joint use is to terminate—events advance—and the question must be settled now by reason and judgment, or it will soon settle itself by chance and arms. Forty-nine is the line of right with me; and, acting upon the second half of the great maxim, *SUBMIT TO NOTHING WRONG!* I shall submit to no invasion or encroachment upon that line.

Senators may now see the reason why, for twenty-five years, I have adhered to the line of Utrecht. It is the line of RIGHT, which gives to us the Olympic district and its invaluable waters, and secures to us the river and valley of the Columbia. It is the fighting line of the United States. The UNION can be rallied on that line!

Mr. B. having spoken until half past three o'clock P. M., without concluding, gave way for a motion to go into Executive session.

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THURSDAY, May 28, 1846.

MR. PRESIDENT: In the progress of my speech I find another little bit of rubbish in my path, just thrown into it from the other side of the sea—from London—which I must clear away before I proceed further. It is in the form of an article in the London Times newspaper. A friend has just sent me some numbers of that paper, in which a furious war is waged upon the Utrecht line of 49°, motived by the conversational debate which took place in this chamber some two months ago, and in which the Senator from Michigan [Mr. Cass] and myself were speakers, and in which the existence, or non-existence, of that line was the point of contestation. The Times takes part with the Senator from Michigan, and carries into his subject the usual quantity of his fiery zeal. It so happens, Mr. President, that I possess a very delicate scent, and smell things, especially of the rat species, at an immense distance. So, when I read these articles in the Times, I smelt them—smelt the beaver that was in them! and, the scent coming upon me very strong, I was struck with an idea. It was the same which struck the worthy Dr. Primrose the second time that he met the accomplished Ephraim Jenkinson, and heard from him a second rehearsal of his greek learning on the cosmogony, or creation of the world. "Pardon me sir, said the Doctor, for interrupting so much learning, but I think I have heard all this before." The apparition of the fair, with all the catastrophe of the colt and blackberry, immediately rose upon the mental vision of the learned commentator on Sanconiaton, Manetho, Lucellus Ocanus, and Berosus. Seeing he was caught, he confessed; for Jenkinson had some redeeming points about him, and never lied when there was no use in it. He confessed the whole; and the Doctor's "idea" received the seal of its confirmation from his candor. In like manner, I must beg the pardon of the editor of the Times, with the suggestion that I have seen all this Utrecht learning before; that it is an old acquaintance of mine; all familiar to me from the time that President Jefferson's governor of Louisiana drove the British traders across the line of Utrecht—across 49—and kept them there, regardless of all their cries and lamentations. I recognised this old acquaintance in these new articles in the Times—nothing changed in spirit, only in form.

The Earl of Selkirk, and his associate sufferers, in forensic language, confessed and avoided; that is to say, they admitted the line of Utrecht, but plead its abrogation by war, and its supersedeas by the consent and connivance of the Spaniards; but the new articles, improved by the intrepidity, if not by the profundity, of Greenhow's book, (accredited as it is on this floor by the Senator from Michigan,) boldly take the short cut to the object, and now deny, out and out, what was confessed and avoided before. In other respects, the Times articles now, are the memorials of the British fur-traders at the epoch of the acquisition of Louisiana, and the expulsion of these traders from it by virtue

of the Utrecht line of 49. And now I want to ask the Senator from Michigan [Mr. Cass] if, at seeing himself thus applauded by the London Times, he does not feel tempted, like the Athenian of old at seeing himself applauded by a rabble that he despised, to turn round to his friends, and ask what he had done amiss to bring this applause upon him? [Mr. Cass nodded assent.] I can tell him what he has done amiss: he has taken the British fur-traders' side of the line of Utrecht. And as for the editor of the Times, if he wishes light on the subject, I can refer him to authentic sources of information just at his hand, namely: the King's map, with the Utrecht line upon it, as well as the Maine boundary line upon it, (all written in the old King's own hand,) which so marvellously disappeared from the Foreign Office at the time of the Ashburton treaty; and also to the thin quarto, with red edges, printed at the corner of St. Martin's Lane, Charing Cross, London, anno Domini MDCCLIII, prepared by Thomas Jeffreys, Esq., Geographer to the Prince of Wales, and intended for the instruction of the heir-apparent to the dominions whose boundaries he was defining to him. Upon Jenkinson's principle, the Times editor should confess, after seeing this map of George the Third, and this geography, in which that king studied the boundaries of his dominions.

This bit of rubbish being removed from my path, I now go on with my subject.

The value of the country—I mean the Columbia river and its valley—(I must repeat the limitation every time, lest I be carried up to 54° 40')—has been questioned on this floor and elsewhere. It has been supposed to be of little value—hardly worth the possession, much less the acquisition; and treated rather as a burden to be got rid of, than as a benefit to be preserved. This is a great error, and one that only prevails on this side of the water: the British know better; and if they held the title of our title, they would fight the world for what we depreciate. It is not a worthless country, but one of immense value, and that under many aspects, and will be occupied by others, to our injury and annoyance, if not by ourselves for our own benefit and protection. Forty years ago it was written by Humboldt, that the banks of the Columbia presented the only situation on the north-west coast of America fit for the residence of a civilized people. Experience has confirmed the truth of this wise remark. All the rest of the coast, from the Straits of Fuca out to New Archangel, (and nothing but a fur trading post there,) remains a vacant waste, abandoned since the quarrel of Nootka Sound, and become the derelict of nations. The Columbia only invites a possessor; and for that possession, sagacious British diplomacy has been long weaving its web. It is not a worthless possession; but valuable under many and large aspects; to the consideration of some of which I now proceed.

It is valuable, both as a country to be inhabited, and as a position to be held and defended. I speak of it, first, as a position, commanding the North Pacific ocean, and overlooking the eastern coast of Asia. The North Pacific is a rich sea, and is already the seat of a great commerce: British, French, American, Russian, and ships of other nations, frequent it. Our whaling ships cover it:

our ships of war go there to protect our interest; and, great as that interest now is, it is only the beginning. Futurity will develop an immense, and various, commerce on that sea, of which the far greater part will be American. That commerce, neither in the merchant ships which carry it on, nor in the military marine which protects it, can find a port, to call its own, within twenty thousand miles of the field of its operations. The double length of the two Americas has to be run—a stormy and tempestuous cape to be doubled—to find itself in a port of its own country: while here lies one in the very edge of its field, ours by right, ready for use, and ample for every purpose of refuge and repair, protection and domination. Can we turn our back upon it? and, in turning the back, deliver it up to the British? Insane, and suicidal would be the fatal act!

To say nothing of the daily want of such a port in time of peace, its want, in time of war, becomes ruinous. Commodore Porter has often told me that, with protection from batteries in the mouth of the Columbia, he never would have put himself in a condition to be attacked under the weak, or collusive guns of a neutral port. He has told me that, with such a port for the reception of his prizes, he would not have sunk in the ocean, or hid in islands where it was often found, the three millions of British property captured in his three years daring and dauntless cruise. Often has he told me, that, with such a port at his hand, he would never have been driven to spill upon the waters, that oil, for want of which, as a member of the British Parliament said, London had burnt darkly—had been in the dark—for a whole year. What happened to Commodore Porter and his prizes—what happened to all our merchant ships, driven from the North Pacific during the war—all this to happen again, and upon a far larger scale, is but half the evil of turning our backs now upon this commanding position; for, to do so, is to deliver it into the hands of a Power that knows the value of positions—the four quarters of the globe, and our own coasts attest that—and has her eye on this one. The very year after the renewal of the delusive convention of 1818—in the year 1829—a master ship-carpenter was despatched from London to Fort Vancouver, to begin there the repair of vessels, and even the construction of small ones; and this work has been going on ever since. She resists our possession now! If we abandon, she will retain! And her wooden walls, bristling with cannon, and issuing from the mouth of the Columbia, will give the law to the North Pacific, permitting our ships to sneak about in time of peace—sinking, seizing, or chasing them away, in time of war. As a position, then, and if nothing but a rock, or desert point, the possession of the Columbia is invaluable to us; and it becomes our duty to maintain it at all hazards.

Agriculturally the value of the country is great; and, to understand it in all its extent, this large country should be contemplated under its different divisions—the threefold natural geographical divisions under which it presents itself: the maritime, the middle, and the mountain districts.

✓ The maritime region—the fertile part of it—is the long valley between the Cascade and the coast ranges of mountains, extending from the head of the

Wah-lah-math, near the latitude of 42 degrees, to the Straits of Fuca, near latitude 49. In this valley lies the rich tidewater region of the Columbia, with the Wah-lah-math river on the south, and the Coweliske, and the Olympic district, on the north. It is a valley of near five hundred miles long, north and south, and above one hundred wide;—rich in soil, grass and timber—sufficient of itself to constitute a respectable State, and now the seat of the British commercial and military post of Vancouver, and of their great farming establishment of Nisqually.

The middle district, from the Cascade range to near the base of the Rocky Mountains, is the region called, desert, and which, in the imaginations of many, has given character to the whole country. In some respects it is a desert—barren of wood—sprinkled with sandy plains—melancholy under the sombre aspect of the gloomy artemisia—and desolate from volcanic rocks, through the chasms of which plunge the headlong streams. But this desert has its redeeming points—much water—grass—many oases—mountains capped with snow, to refresh the air, the land, and the eye—blooming valleys—a clear sky, pure air, and a supreme salubrity. It is the home of the horse! found there wild in all the perfection of his first nature—beautiful and fleet—fiery and docile—patient, enduring, and affectionate. General Clark has told me that, of the one hundred and seventy horses which he and Lewis obtained in this district, he had never seen the match in any equal number; and he had seen the finest which the sporting course, or the warlike parade, had exhibited in Virginia. It is the home of that horse—the horse of Persia—which gallops his eighty miles a day—swimming the rivers as he comes to them—finds his own food at night, the hoof scraping away the snow when it hides the grass—gallops his eighty miles again the next day; and so on through a long and healthy life; carrying his master in the chase, or the fight, circumventing the game, and pursuing the foe, with the intelligence of reason and the fidelity of friendship. General Clark has informed me that it was necessary to keep a scout ahead, to drive away the elk and buffalo, at the sight of which all their horses immediately formed for the chase, the loose ones dashing off to surround and circumvent the game. The old hunters also have told me their marvellous stories about these horses, and that in war and hunting they had more sense than people, and as much courage, and loved it as well. The country that produces such horses, must also produce men, and cattle, and all the inferior animals; and must have many beneficent attributes to redeem it from the stigma of desolation.

The mountain division has its own peculiar features, and many of them as useful as picturesque. At the base of the mountains, a long, broad, and high bench is seen—three hundred miles long, fifty miles wide—the deposit of abraded mountains of snow and verdure through thousands of years. Lewis and Clark thus describe this great bench of land, which they twice crossed in their expedition to and from the Pacific ocean:

“The country along the Rocky Mountains, for several hundred miles in length and about fifty wide, is a high level plain; in all its parts extremely fertile, and in many places

covered with a growth of tall, long-leaved pine. This plain is chiefly interrupted near the streams of water, where the hills are steep and lofty; but the soil is good, being unencumbered by much stone, and possesses more timber than the level country. Under shelter of these hills, the bottom lands skirt the margin of the rivers, and though narrow and confined, are still fertile and rarely inundated. Nearly the whole of this widespread tract is covered with a profusion of grass and plants, which are at this time (May) as high as the knee. Among these are a variety of esculent plants and roots, acquired without much difficulty, and yielding not only a nutritious, but a very agreeable food. The air is pure and dry, the climate quite as mild, if not milder, than the same parallels of latitude in the Atlantic States, and must be equally healthy, for all the disorders which we have witnessed may fairly be imputed more to the nature of the diet than to any intemperance of climate. This general observation is of course to be qualified, since in the same tract of country the degrees of the combination of heat and cold obey the influence of situation. Thus the rains of the low grounds, near our camp, are snows in the high plains; and while the sun shines with intense heat in the confined bottoms, the plains enjoy a much colder air, and the vegetation is retarded at least fifteen days, while at the foot of the mountains the snows are still many feet in depth; so that within twenty miles of our camp we observe the rigors of winter cold, the cool air of spring, and the oppressive heat of midsummer. Even on the plains, however, where the snow has fallen, it seems to do but little injury to the grass and other plants, which, though apparently tender and susceptible, are still blooming, at the height of nearly eighteen inches through the snow. In short, this district affords many advantages to settlers, and if properly cultivated, would yield every object necessary for the subsistence and comfort of civilized man.”

Other, and smaller benches of the same character, are frequently seen, inviting the farmer to make his healthy habitation and fertile field upon it.

Entering the gorges of the mountains, and a succession of everything is found which is seen in the alpine regions of Switzerland, glaciers only excepted. Magnificent mountain scenery—lakes—grassy valleys—snow-capped mountains—clear streams and fountains—coves and parks—hot and warm springs—mineral waters of many varieties—salt in the solid and fluid state—salt lakes, and even hot salt springs—wood, coal, and iron. Such are the Rocky Mountains in the long and broad section from the head of the Rio Grande del Norte, of the sunny South, to the head of the Athabasca, of the Frozen ocean. This ample, rich, and elevated mountain region is deemed, by those unacquainted with the Farthest West, to be, and to be forever, the desolate and frozen dominion of the wild beast and the savage. On the contrary, I view it as the future seat of population and power, where man is to appear in all the moral, intellectual, and physical endowments which ennoble the mountain race, and where liberty, independence, and love of virtue, are to make their last stand on earth.

Thus, agriculturally, and as producing the means of human subsistence—as sustaining a population, and supplying the elements of wealth and power, as derived from the surface and the bowels of the earth—I look upon the region drained by the waters of the Columbia as one of the valuable divisions of the North American continent.

No reason to undervalue it on the score of commerce. But this branch of her advantages are attacked through another channel—in the supposed unfitness of the mouth of the Columbia for the purposes of a port, commercial or naval. An expedition of our own (Captain Wilkes) has fostered this opinion; but fortunately furnishes the correction to its own error. The narrative of the

expedition condemns the port: the chart that accompanies it, proves it to be good. This chart was constructed upon the seventy days' labor of three young gentlemen, midshipmen in the expedition, whose numerous soundings show the diligence and the accuracy of their work—their names, Knox, Reynolds, and Blair. I read what was written in the narrative: it differed from all that I had read before. I examined the chart: it appeared to me to present a fine harbor. But, being no nautical man, I put no faith in my own opinions, and had recourse to others. Mr. James Blair, one of the three midshipmen who had surveyed the port, was in this city, son of my friend Francis P. Blair. I talked with him. His answers were satisfactory. I addressed him written queries. He answered them; and his answers, supported by facts and reasons, placed the harbor above that of New York. But a New York pilot was in the city—Mr. John Maginn—for eighteen years a pilot there, and that upon an apprenticeship of ten years, and now the President of the New York Association of Pilots, and their agent to attend to the pilot bill before Congress; he was here, and made my acquaintance. I asked him to compare the charts of the two harbors, New York and the mouth of the Columbia, and give his opinion in writing, detailed and reasoned, of their respective merits. He did so: and these answers place the port of the Columbia far above that of New York in every particular, without exception, which constitutes a good harbor. In depth of water and in width of channel—in directness of channels, one being exactly straight, the other with an elbow only—in the form and character of the bar, which is narrow, with a hard sand bottom, and gently sloping to the shores—in readiness of access to the sea, being in the very edge of the ocean—in freedom from ice in winter and great heats in summer—in steadiness of winds and currents—in freedom from shelters outside of the harbor, where enemies' ships or fleets in time of war, can hide, and lie in wait for returning or outgoing vessels—in number, extent, and safety of anchoring places, sufficient for any number and any class of vessels, immediately within the harbor—in defensibility, being, from the narrowness of the mouth and the high points which overlook it, susceptible of absolute defence. And in this respect, the mouth of the Columbia stands out pre-eminently distinguished over all the rivers of the Atlantic, and most of those of the world. No seven mouths, like the Nile, or three like the Mississippi—no broad outlets through low sands and marshes—no wide expanse of water at its mouth, but a bay within, large enough to hold ten thousand vessels, a narrow gate to enter the sea, and promontories on each side to receive batteries to defend it. In short, in a state of nature, without pilots, light-houses, buoys, beacons, steam tow-boats, an excellent port: with these advantages, superior to New York for every vessel, from the merchant service to the ship-of-the-line. Such is the harbor at the mouth of the Columbia, which has been undervalued for several reasons; among others, to find an argument for going to 54° 40' to search for harbors in the depths of volcanic chasms, often too deep for anchorage, too abrupt for approach, and always seated in sterile lands to which

geography has attached the name of Desolation. Like the other disadvantages attributed to the Columbia, that of the harbor at the mouth of the river vanishes at the touch of examination! not only vanishes, but turns out to be one of its great and positive superiorities. I would read the statements of Midshipman Blair, and the pilot, Mr. Maginn, but find them too long for a place in a speech: they will appear in an appendix. All the capacities of this harbor are well known to the British. Often have their Government vessels surveyed it—three times that I know of, and never with a disparaging report. But why argue? While I speak, the work is going on. Vessels have been entering the port since 1792—a period of fifty-six years—without pilots, lights, buoys, beacons, steam tow-boats: without any of the aids which the skill and power of civilization gives to a port. They are entering it now; and, counting from its first discovery, there is not a day in the year, nor an hour in the day, or in the night, in which they have not entered it, and entered it safely. A few have been wrecked, and very few; the great mass have entered safely, and this in a state of nature. What will it be, then, when aided like the established ports of the civilized world?

The carrying trade between eastern Asia and western America will be another of the advantages belonging to the Columbia. It is the only position between the Isthmus of Darien and Behring's Straits on which a naval power can exist. Mexico has no timber, few ports, and none of the elements of ship building. The Lower California is the same. Northern California, with the Bay of San Francisco, and the magnificent timber of the Sierra Nevada, is now shown, by the discoveries of Captain Frémont, to be geographically appurtenant to the Columbia, and in time must obey its destiny. The Columbia river is the seat of a great naval pre-eminence: magnificent timber—the whole tidewater region of the river, 180 miles in length—fit for a continuous ship-yard—supplied with everything from above—secure against the possibility of hostile approach from below. North of the Straits of Fuca, it is a continued volcanic desolation, where ships will hardly go, much less be built. During three hundred years, it has remained, and still remains, the derelict of nations. Russian fur-traders alone have seated themselves upon some of its hyperborean islands. There is no seat for a naval power on the western coast of North America, except on the Columbia. The Asiatics have no taste for the sea; they never seek the great ocean. The people on the Columbia, then, will be the carriers, almost exclusively, between eastern Asia, and its myriad of islands, on one side, and all Mexico, California, and Northwest America, on the other; and rich will be the profits of such carrying. I set it down as another of the great advantages of the Columbia.

The grasses of the country, indigenous as they are, and in the wild state, are named by Captain Frémont as among its natural advantages, sources of national and individual wealth, and the means of changing the mode of military operations, by dispensing with the heavy commissariat of European armies. Horses for the men to ride on, and cattle for them to feed on, would both find their support in these grasses, and permit the most rapid

and extended movements of mounted gun-men, cavalry, and horse artillery. He says:

"Referring to my journal for particular descriptions, and for sectional boundaries between good and bad districts, I can only say, in general and comparative terms, that, in that branch of agriculture which implies the cultivation of grains and staple crops, it would be inferior to the Atlantic States, though many parts are superior for wheat; while, in the rearing of flocks and herds, it would claim a high place. Its grazing capabilities are great; and even in the indigenous grass now there, an element of national and individual wealth may be found. In fact, the valuable grasses begin within one hundred and fifty miles of the Missouri frontier, and extend to the Pacific ocean. East of the Rocky Mountains, it is the short curly grass, on which the buffalo delights to feed, (whence its name of buffalo,) and which is still good when dry and apparently dead. West of those mountains, it is a larger growth, in clusters, and hence called bunch grass, and which has a second or fall growth. Plains and mountains both exhibit them; and I have seen good pasturage at an elevation of ten thousand feet. In this spontaneous product, the trading or travelling caravans can find subsistence for their animals; and, in military operations, any number of cavalry may be moved, and any number of cattle may be driven; and thus men and horses be supported on long expeditions, and even in winter in the sheltered situations." (P. 277.)

Militarily, its advantages are vast, and are graphically sketched by Captain Frémont. In his extended explorations, he has viewed the country under every aspect of natural or physical geography, and thus presents it under its military aspect in a state of nature:

"The Columbia is the only river which traverses the whole breadth of the country, breaking through all the ranges, and entering the sea. Drawing its waters from a section of ten degrees of latitude in the Rocky Mountains, which are collected into one stream by three main forks, (Lewis's, Clark's, and the North fork,) near the centre of the Oregon valley, this great river thence proceeds by a single channel to the sea, while its three forks lead each to a pass in the mountains, which opens the way into the interior of the continent. This fact in relation to the rivers of this region, gives an immense value to the Columbia. Its mouth is the only inlet and outlet to and from the sea; its three forks lead to the passes in the mountains; it is, therefore, the only line of communication between the Pacific and the interior of North America; and all operations of war or commerce, of national or social intercourse, must be conducted upon it. This gives it a value beyond estimation, and would involve irreparable injury if lost. In this unity and concentration of its waters, the Pacific side of our continent differs entirely from the Atlantic side, where the waters of the Alleghany Mountains are dispersed into many rivers, having their different entrances into the sea, and opening many lines of communication with the interior.

"The Pacific coast is equally different from that of the Atlantic. The coast of the Atlantic is low and open, indented with numerous bays, sounds, and river estuaries, accessible everywhere, and opening by many channels into the heart of the country. The Pacific coast, on the contrary, is high and compact, with few bays, and but one that opens into the heart of the country. The immediate coast is what the seamen call *iron bound*. A little within, it is skirted by two successive ranges of mountains, standing as ramparts between the sea and the interior country; and to get through which, there is but one gate, and that narrow and easily defended. This structure of the coast, backed by these two ranges of mountains, with its concentration and unity of waters, gives to the country an immense military strength, and will probably render Oregon the most impregnable country in the world." (pp. 274-5.)

Commercially, the advantages of Oregon will be great—far greater than any equal portion of the Atlantic States. The eastern Asiatics, who will be their chief customers, are more numerous than our customers in western Europe—more profitable to trade with, and less dangerous to quarrel with. Their articles of commerce are richer than those of Europe; they want what the Oregonians will have to spare—bread and provisions—and have no sys-

tems of policy to prevent them from purchasing these necessities of life from those who can supply them. The sea which washes their shores is every way a better sea than the Atlantic—richer in its whale and other fisheries—in the fur regions which enclose it to the north—more fortunate in the tranquillity of its character, in its freedom from storms, gulf-streams, and icebergs—in its perfect adaptation to steam navigation—in its intermediate or half-way islands, and its myriad of rich islands on its further side;—in its freedom from maritime Powers on its coasts, except the American, which is to grow up at the mouth of the Columbia. As a people to trade with—as a sea to navigate—the Mongolian race of eastern Asia, and the North Pacific ocean, are far preferable to the Europeans and the Atlantic.

But enough of this. The country is vindicated: error is dispelled. Instead of worthlessness, the region of the Oregon is proved to have all the capabilities of an immense Power. Agricultural capabilities to sustain a great population, and to furnish the elements of commerce and manufactures—a vast and rich commerce and navigation at its hands—a peaceable sea to navigate—gentle and profitable people to trade with them—a climate of supreme and almost miraculous salubrity—a natural frontier of mountain ramparts—a triple barrier of mountains—to give her a military impregnability.

Having cleared away the errors which undervalued the country, and pointed out the advantages peculiar to it, I now come to another advantage, common to all North America, and long since the cherished vision of my young imagination. A Russian Empress said of the Crimea: Here lies the road to Byzantium. I say to my fellow-citizens: Through the valley of the Columbia, lies the North American road to India. Twenty-eight years ago I wrote something on this head, and published it. A quarter of a century of experience and observation has given me nothing to detract from what I then wrote—nothing to add, except as derived from the progress of the arts, and especially omnipotent steam.

The trade of the East has always been the richest jewel in the diadem of commerce. All nations, in all ages, have sought it; and those which obtained it, or even a share of it, attained the highest degree of opulence, refinement, and power. The routes through which it flowed fertilized deserts, and built up cities and kingdoms amidst the desolation of rocks and sands. Phenicia, Egypt, Persia, were among the ancient thoroughfares of this commerce; Constantinople and Alexandria among its modern channels; and Venice and Genoa in the south, and Bruges and Antwerp in the north, the means of its distribution over Europe. All grew rich and powerful upon it; and, with wealth and power, came civilization and refinement. The Cape of Good Hope became the recent route, with wealth to its discoverers, the Portuguese, and to all their rivals and followers—the Dutch, English, French, and others.

The commerce of Asia, always dazzling to the Oriental nations, became the intense object of desire to the western Europeans, from the time that the crusaders visited Constantinople, and Vasca di Gama doubled the Cape of Good Hope. The daz-

zing attraction of this commerce was the cause of the discovery of the New World. Columbus, going west to Asia, was arrested by the intervention of the two Americas. From his day to the present, skill and power have exerted themselves to get round, or through this formidable obstacle. All the attempts to discover a northwest passage were so many attempts to discover a western road to India. All the discoveries of the French among the interior lakes and great rivers of North America were with the same view. La Salle, the great French discoverer, parting from his friends eight miles from Montreal, for his last word, exclaimed, *La Chine!* (China), as the word which displayed the object and end of his adventurous enterprise; and by that name the spot is known to this day. He had all the qualities of a great discoverer but one: he knew not how to conciliate the feelings of his people, and fell a sacrifice to their resentment on the Arkansas. The Jesuit fathers, courageous and pious missionaries, to whom the world was indebted for all its early knowledge of the interior of North America, (I am speaking only of this interior,) seeing the waters of a thousand lakes, held in equilibrium on a vast plateau in the centre of the continent, from which three great rivers went off north, south, and east, to the Atlantic; and hearing the Indians speak of a river of the west, in their language *Oregon*—a spelling which Humboldt follows—naturally supposed that, from the same plateau a fourth great river went off west, and actually sketched an *Oregon* from Lake Winepec to the Pacific, still to be seen on some old maps. They were right in the fact of the river, though mistaken in its source; and this is the first knowledge which history has of *Oregon*.

Mr. Jefferson, that man of rare endowments and common sense—of genius and judgment—philosophy and practice—whose fertile mind was always teeming with enterprises beneficial to his species: this rare man, following up the grand idea of Columbus, and taking up the unfinished enterprise of La Salle, and anxious to crowd into his Administration a galaxy of brilliant events, early projected the discovery of an inland route to the Pacific ocean. The Missouri river was to be one long link in this chain of communication: the Columbia, or any other that might serve the purpose, on the other side of the mountains, was to be another. Lewis and Clark were sent out to discover a commercial route to the Pacific ocean; and so judiciously was their enterprise conducted that their return route must become, and forever remain, the route of commerce: the route further south, through the South Pass, near latitude 42, will be the travelling road; but commerce will take the water line of their return, crossing the Rocky Mountains in latitude 47, through the North Pass.

With the exception of a small part of the route, the Hudson Bay Company now follow, and have followed for thirty years, the route of Lewis and Clark. These eminent discoverers left the Columbia river near the mouth of Lewis's fork, went up the Kooskooske, thence over a high mountain to the forks of Clark's river; and thence through the North Pass to the Great Falls of the Missouri. The Hudson Bay Company have discovered a better route to Clark's river, following the Columbia higher up, and leaving it at the Upper

Falls, in latitude about $48\frac{1}{2}$, and where they have established their *dépôt* for the mountain trade, called Fort Colville. From these Falls it is sixty miles overland to Clark's river, whence the river is navigable to its forks, three hundred miles up, and within one hundred and fifty miles of the Great Falls of the Missouri. Along this route the Hudson Bay Company have carried on their trade, for near thirty years, even quite through to the east side of the Rocky Mountains; paying no duties, using our river and territories, poisoning the minds of the Indians against us, and exhausting the country of its furs. Their goods arrive at Fort Vancouver in ships from London—ascend the Columbia to Fort Colville in *batteaux*—make a portage of sixty miles to Clark's river, the lower part of that river being unfit for navigation; then ascend Clark's river to its forks, three hundred miles, and thence to the headwaters of the Missouri. The only part of this route with which I have but little acquaintance is the sixty miles of portage from the Upper Falls of the Columbia to the point where Clark's river can be navigated. It may be mountainous; but that it is practicable, is proved by the fact that the Hudson Bay Company have used it for thirty years: that it is the best route, is proved by the further fact that long acquaintance with the country has not induced them to change it. With this slight deviation, the Hudson Bay Company follow the return route of Lewis and Clark; and this will be the route of commerce to the end of time.

The Columbia river is decried for its navigation, not by the British, who know its value, and struggle to maintain its possession; but by those who see the whole country beyond the Rocky Mountains through the medium of depreciation. It is, even in a state of nature, a practicable river for navigation. The tide flows up it one hundred and eighty miles; and to that distance there is ship navigation. *Batteaux* ascend it to Fort Colville, at the Upper Falls, making more, or fewer, portages, according to the state of the water; and beyond that point they still ascend, to the "Boat Encampment," opposite the head of the Athabasca; where a Pass in the mountains leads to the waters of the Frozen ocean. Periodically, the river is flooded by the melting of the snows in the mountains; and then many of the falls and rapids are buried in deep water, and no trace of them seen. This is even the case with the Great Falls, where a pitch of twenty-eight feet, at low water, disappears wholly under the flood. Sixty feet is the rise, and that annual, and punctual. No ice obstructs its surface: no sunken trees encumber its bottom. Art will improve the navigation, and steam-vessels will undoubtedly run to the Upper Falls—the pitch sixteen feet—a distance from tidewater of some six hundred miles; and the point where the land carriage of sixty miles begins. Clark's river has a breadth of one hundred and fifty yards, up to its forks, being near the width of the Cumberland at Nashville. The melting of the snows gives it a periodical flood. The valley through which this river flows is rich and handsome, in places fifteen miles wide, well wooded and grassy, ornamented with the beautiful Flat Head Lake—a lake of thirty-five miles in length, seated in a large fertile cove, and embosomed in snow-capped mountains. Hot and warm springs, advantageously compared by

Lewis and Clark to those in Virginia, also enrich it; and when the East India trade has taken its course through this valley, here may grow up, not a Palmyra of the desert, but a Palmyra, queen of the mountains. From the forks of Clark's river, nearly due east, it is about ninety miles to the North Pass, along a well-beaten buffalo road, and over a fertile, grassy, and nearly level mountain plain. The North Pass is as easy as the South—practicable by any vehicle in a state of nature, and no obstacle to the full day's march of the traveller. Lewis and Clark made thirty-two miles the day they came through it, and without being sensible of any essential rise at the point of separation between the Atlantic and Pacific waters. To the right and left the mountains rose high; but the Pass itself is a depression in the mountain, sinking to the level of the country at their base. From this Pass to the Great Falls of the Missouri, and nearly east from it, is sixty miles—in all, one hundred and fifty miles from the forks of Clark's river to the Great Falls of the Missouri, which, added to sixty miles from Clark's river to the Upper Falls of the Columbia, gives two hundred and ten miles of land carriage between the large navigable waters of the Columbia and Missouri.

This is the sum of my best information on the subject, the result of thirty years inquiries, and believed to be correct; but an accurate topographical survey of the country between the two rivers, and a profile, as well as a superficies map, with barometrical, geological, botanical, astronomical, and meteorological tables and observations, would solve every question, and be a large contribution to the science of the age, and to the future transaction of business. If snow, during some months, should be found to impede the steam car in this elevated region, (guessed to be seven thousand feet above the level of the sea,) that same snow becomes the basis for the next best land conveyance after the steam car—the sleigh. So that this little intervention of dry ground between Canton and New York will prove to be no obstacle either in summer or winter.

Arrived at the Great Falls of the Missouri, the East India merchant may look back and say, my voyage is finished! He may look forward and say, a thousand markets lie before me, of all which I may take choice. A downward navigation of two thousand five hundred miles carries him to St. Louis, the centre of the valley of the Mississippi, and the focus to which converge all the steamboats—now thousands, hereafter to be myriads—from all the extended circumference of that vast valley. Long before he reaches St. Louis, he is running the double line of American towns and villages seated on either bank of the river. The Missouri river is said to be the best steamboat river upon the face of the earth—the longest—retaining its water best at all seasons, and periodically flooded at a known day—free from rocks, and, for nearly two thousand miles, free from sunken trees; for it is on approaching the heavy forest lands of the lower Missouri that this obstruction occurs. All above is clear of this danger. The river is large from the Falls down; the mountain streams, almost innumerable, pouring down such ample contributions. At the Mandan villages, and after the junction with the Yellow Stone, itself equal in length to the Ohio,

it presents the same majestic appearance to the eye that it does towards its mouth. Coal lines its banks in many places; fertile land abounds. A military post will doubtless soon be established at the Great Falls, as also on this side, at the Yellow Stone, and beyond, in the valley of Clark's river, and on the Columbia, at the Upper Falls: every post will be the nucleus of a settlement, and the future site of a great city. The East India merchant, upon the new North American road, will find himself at home, and among his countrymen, and under the flag and the arms of his country, from the moment he reaches the mouth of the Columbia—say within fifteen days after leaving Canton! All the rest, to the remotest market which he can choose, either in the vast interior of the Union, or on its extended circumference, will be among friends. What a contrast to the time, and the perils, the exposure and expense of protection, which the present six months' voyage involves!

Arrived at the Great Falls of the Missouri, the East India merchant, upon this new road, will see a thousand markets before him, each inviting his approach, and of easy, direct, and ready access. A downward navigation of rapid descent takes him to St. Louis, and New Orleans, and to all the places between. A continuous voyage, without shifting the position of an ounce of his cargo, will carry him from the Great Falls to Pittsburg; a single transshipment, and three days will take him to the Atlantic coast: omnipotent steam flying him from Canton to Philadelphia in the marvellous space of some forty-odd days! I only mention one line, and one city, as a sample of all the rest. What is said of Pittsburg and Philadelphia, may be equally said of all the western river towns towards the heads of navigation, and of all the Atlantic, Gulf, or Lake cities, with which they communicate. Some sixty days, the usual run of a bill of exchange, will reach the most remote: so that a merchant may give a sixty days' bill in his own country, after this route is in operation, and pay it at maturity with silks and teas which were in Canton on the day of its date.

This is the North American Road to India, all ready now for use, except the short link from the mouth of the Columbia to the Great Falls of Missouri!—all the rest now ready—made ready by nature, aided by private means and individual enterprise, without the aid, or even countenance of government! And will government now refuse its aid; nay, more, obstruct the enterprise of individuals, and frustrate the designs of nature, by leaving the Columbia where it im providently placed it, in the year 1818—in the hands of a foreign Power, and that Power Great Britain? Forbid it, every principle of right and justice—every consideration of policy and interest. Now is the time to decide this great question, and to redeem the error of 1818. My voice denounced the error then, and was unheeded. It was solitary, and received no response. A nation now demands it; and it is not for a nation's representatives to disregard a nation's call. But even if it should be so, it may defer, but cannot defeat, the great event. There is an order in the march of human events which the improvidence of governments may derange, but cannot destroy. Individuals will accomplish what governments neglect, and events will go forward with-

out law to guide them. So it has been already with this Columbia. In 1792, a private individual of Boston discovered this river: he revealed its existence to the world: government took no notice of his splendid revelation. In 1806 Lewis and Clark returned from the Columbia: government sent no troops there to occupy and retain the domain which they had nationalized. The seat of a future empire lay a derelict on the coast of its rich and tranquil sea. An individual administered upon the vacant domain. A man of head—Mr. John Jacob Astor—sent a colony there. During two years his batteaux, carrying up goods, and bringing down furs, traversed every water of the Columbia; his ships visited Canton, New Archangel, the coasts of California, the Sandwich and the Polynesian islands. Astoria was in communication with the commercial world. The name of the young TYRE—future queen of the New World—was known to nations. Then came the acts of government to balk, delay, defer the great commencement. I do not mean the war—that was a brief and necessary event—but I speak of the acts of government after the war. The commissioners did their duty at Ghent: all posts, places, territories, taken from the United States during the war, were, by the first article of that treaty, to be restored. The posts or places of Astoria, the Okanogan, the Spokan, the Wah-lah-math, and the whole territory of the Columbia river and its valley, came under the terms of the treaty, and were bound to be restored. The fate of the restoration of all western posts attended the posts on the Columbia. After the peace of 1783, the northwestern posts were retained: British traders, backed by their government, retained them: the Indian wars of 1791–3–4, were the fruit of that retention; and the war of 1812 found one of its roots in the same cause. This was the fate of western posts after the war of the Revolution. After the war of 1812, a far worse fate awaited the western posts on the Columbia. A fictitious restoration of one post was transacted—to be accompanied, in the very moment of the transaction, by the surrender of the whole country to the British. I say the surrender of the whole; for nothing less was, or could be, the effect of a joint-use possession between the weak and the strong; between the scattered and dispersed American traders, abandoned by their government, and the organized British companies, supported by theirs! A quarter of a century the British have held the Columbia, the government doing nothing. Four years ago the people began to move. They crossed the Rocky Mountains; they have gone down into the tidewater region of the Columbia. Without the aid of government, they are recovering what government lost, and renewing the phenomenon of mere individuals exploring the bounds of distant lands, and laying the foundation of distant empires. The question of American colonization of the Columbia is settled! The people have settled it; they are now there, and will stay there. The trade with India will begin. If no more John Jacob Astors shall arise to commence the trade upon a great scale, it will proceed upon a small one—grow up by degrees—find an emporium in the mouth of the Columbia, and spread itself all over North America, through the line of the Columbia and of the Missouri. The North American road

to India will be established by the people, if not by the government. The rich commerce of the East will find a new route to the New World, followed by the wealth and power which has always attended it; and this will be another of the advantages resulting from the occupation of the Columbia.

And now, Mr. President, this is the exact reason why the British want the Columbia. They want it as the indispensable link in their own projected North American route to India. This is shown in McKenzie's history of his voyages of discovery in 1789 and 1793. On both occasions he was seeking a river line of communication between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific. In the first voyage he followed the Unjigah, or Peace river, bearing northwest through the Great Slave Lake and the Great Bear Lake, and after two thousand miles of navigation, found himself at the Frozen Ocean, north, or rather east of Behring's Straits. That was too far north to answer any purpose. In the year 1793, he sat out again to find a more southern river to the Pacific. On both voyages he sat out from the same point—Fort Chipewyan, on the Athabasca Lake. Instead of descending the Unjigah, he now ascended it—went up to its head in the Rocky Mountains—passed through a low gap—found a stream flowing west, (Frazer's river,) and followed it from its source in 55° of north latitude, down to 52°. Finding it to bear south, and becoming a large river, McKenzie believed it to be the Columbia, already discovered by Gray; and thereupon left it, and crossed over direct to the Pacific ocean, which he reached some distance north of Vancouver's Island. This voyage, like the other, had failed in its object: it found no navigable British river leading to the Pacific. And then a new idea struck the disappointed explorer, which he gave to the country, and impressed upon the British government, eight years afterwards, in his *History of the Fur Trade*. That work, published in London in the year 1801, after lamenting that a Northwest Passage could not be found, and declaring that the Columbia was the only line of interior communication with the Pacific ocean, boldly proposed to take it! on no other ground than that it was indispensable to the commercial communication between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific, and no obstacle in the way, but American adventurers, who would instantly disappear from before a well-regulated trade! that is to say, before the power of the British fur-trading companies, backed by the power of the British government. Here is the extract from McKenzie's *History*, which very coolly recommends all this policy, as if the taking an American river, and making the Americans disappear from it, was as justifiable an operation as that of catching a beaver, and killing him for his skin. Here is the proposition of McKenzie, earnestly pressed upon his government:

"The Russians, who first discovered that, along the coasts of Asia, no useful or regular navigation existed, opened an interior communication by rivers, &c., and through that long and wide-extended continent, to the strait that separates Asia from America, over which they passed to the American continent. Our situation is, at length, in some degree, similar to theirs: the non-existence of a practicable passage by sea, and the existence of one through the continent, are clearly proved, and it requires only the countenance and support of the British Government to increase, in a very

ample proportion, this national advantage, and secure the trade of that country to its subjects." "By the rivers that discharge themselves into Hudson's Bay, at Port Nelson, it is proposed to carry on the trade to their source, at the head of the Saskatchewan river, which rises in the Rocky Mountains, not eight degrees of longitude from the Pacific Ocean. The Columbia flows from the same mountains, and discharges itself into the Pacific in north latitude 46 20. Both of them are capable of receiving ships at their mouths, and are navigable throughout for boats." "But whatever course may be taken from the Atlantic, the Columbia is the line of communication from the Pacific Ocean pointed out by nature, as it is the only navigable river in the whole extent of Vancouver's minute survey of that coast; its banks, also, form the first level country in all the southern extent of continental coast from Cook's entry; and, consequently, the most northern situation, suitable to the residence of a civilized people. By opening this intercourse between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and forming regular establishments through the interior, and at both extremes, as well as along the coast and islands, the entire command of the fur trade of North America might be obtained, from latitude 48 to the pole, except that portion of it which the Russians have in the Pacific. To this may be added, the fishing in both seas, and the market of the four quarters of the globe. Such would be the field for commercial enterprise, and incalculable would be the produce of it, when supported by the operations of that credit and capital which Great Britain so pre-eminently possesses. Then would this country begin to be remunerated for the expense it has sustained in discovering and surveying the coast of the Pacific Ocean, which is at present left to American adventurers, who, without regularity or capital, or the desire of conciliating future confidence, look altogether to the interests of the moment. Such adventurers (and many of them, as I have been informed, have been very successful) would instantly disappear from before a well regulated trade." "Many political reasons, which it is not necessary here to enumerate, must present themselves to the mind of every man acquainted with the enlarged system and capacities of British commerce, in support of the measures which I have briefly suggested, as promising the most important advantages to the trade of the United Kingdoms."

"For a boundary line between the United States and Great Britain, west of the Mississippi, McKenzie proposes the latitude of 45 degrees, because that latitude is necessary to give the Columbia river to Great Britain. His words are: 'Let the line begin where it may on the Mississippi, it must be continued west till it terminates in the Pacific Ocean, to the south of the Columbia.'"

It was in the year 1801 that McKenzie made this proposition to the British government. That government never ventured to act upon the proposition until after the joint occupation treaty of 1818. Before that, its Ministers here hinted vague claims, but refused to write them down, or to sign them. After that convention, and especially after its renewal in 1823, and after the disappearance of our people from the Columbia under the power and policy of the Hudson Bay Company, then the government took the decisive stand, and went the whole length of McKenzie's recommendation. This is the origin of the British claim to the Columbia!—Because they could not find a north-west passage—because the Unjigah went to the Frozen ocean—because Frazer's river was unnavigable—because the Columbia river was the only practicable line of communication with the Pacific ocean, and its banks the only situation fit for the residence of a civilized people: for these reasons, after long delay and great hesitation, and aided by the improvidence of our government, they set up a claim to the Columbia! It was found to be the only river on which a commercial communication could be opened between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific ocean—the only British American road to India! The command of the North Pacific ocean, and the monopoly of its rich trade, depended upon

the acquisition of the Columbia; and, therefore, they must take it. This is the origin of the British claim to the Columbia river. It was an indispensable link in their commercial line across the continent. The other end of that line was in the frozen and desolate regions of Lake Winipeg and Hudson's Bay, along the icy streams of the Saskatchewan and Mississippi, (Nelson's river;) yet even for such a route as this McKenzie invoked the aid and protection of the British government, and obtained it. That government now backs the powerful fur company—the instrument of its policy in America as the East India Company is in Asia—in its pretensions to the Columbia as the substitute for the Northwest passage; and if they had the title of our title to it, would never surrender it. Even with one end of their lineterminating in the icy and desolate waters of Hudson's Bay, she still struggles for it. What would it be if she had the North Pass and the Missouri river, bearing down south to the centre of the valley of the Mississippi? The British Government would fight the world for such a line as that, and spend unnumbered millions in its improvement and protection: yet we have turned our backs upon it—left it for thirty years a derelict in the hands of our competitors; and I am now listened to with some surprise and incredulity when I represent this grand commercial route to India upon the line of the Missouri and the Columbia, as one of the advantages of Oregon—one of our inducements to maintain our rights there.

The effect of the arrival of the Caucasian, or White race, on the western coast of America, opposite the eastern coast of Asia, remains to be mentioned among the benefits which the settlement of the Columbia will produce; and that a benefit, not local to us, but general and universal to the human race. Since the dispersion of man upon earth, I know of no human event, past or present, which promises a greater, and more beneficent change upon earth than the arrival of the van of the Caucasian race (the Celtic-Anglo-Saxon division) upon the border of the sea which washes the shore of the eastern Asia. The Mongolian, or Yellow race, is there, four hundred millions in number, spreading almost to Europe; a race once the foremost of the human family in the arts of civilization, but torpid and stationary for thousands of years. It is a race far above the Ethiopian, or Black—above the Malay, or Brown, (if we must admit five races)—and above the American Indian, or Red: it is a race far above all these, but still, far below the White; and, like all the rest, must receive an impression from the superior race whenever they come in contact. It would seem that the White race alone received the divine command, to subdue and replenish the earth! for it is the only race that has obeyed it—the only one that hunts out new and distant lands, and even a New World, to subdue and replenish. Starting from western Asia, taking Europe for their field, and the Sun for their guide, and leaving the Mongolians behind, they arrived, after many ages, on the shores of the Atlantic, which they lit up with the lights of science and religion, and adorned with the useful and the elegant arts. Three and a half centuries ago, this race, in obe-

dience to the great command, arrived in the New World, and found new lands to subdue and replenish. For a long time it was confined to the border of the new field, (I now mean the Celtic-Anglo-Saxon division;) and even fourscore years ago the philosophic Burke was considered a rash man because he said the English colonists would top the Alleghanies, and descend into the valley of the Mississippi, and occupy without parchment if the Crown refused to make grants of land. What was considered a rash declaration eighty years ago, is old history, in our young country, at this day. Thirty years ago I said the same thing of the Rocky Mountains and the Columbia: it was ridiculed then: it is becoming history to-day. The venerable Mr. Macon has often told me that he remembered a line low down in North Carolina, fixed by a royal governor as a boundary between the whites and the Indians: where is that boundary now? The van of the Caucasian race now top the Rocky Mountains, and spread down to the shores of the Pacific. In a few years a great population will grow up there, luminous with the accumulated lights of European and American civilization. Their presence in such a position cannot be without its influence upon eastern Asia. The sun of civilization must shine across the sea: socially and commercially, the van of the Caucasians, and the rear of the Mongolians, must intermix. They must talk together, and trade together, and marry together. Commerce is a great civilizer—social intercourse as great—and marriage greater. The White and Yellow races can marry together, as well as eat and trade together. Moral and intellectual superiority will do the rest: the White race will take the ascendant, elevating what is susceptible of improvement—wearing out what is not. The Red race has disappeared from the Atlantic coast: the tribes that resisted civilization, met extinction. This is a cause of lamentation with many. For my part, I cannot murmur at what seems to be the effect of divine law. I cannot repine that this Capitol has replaced the wigwam—this Christian people, replaced the savages—white matrons, the red squaws—and that such men as Washington, Franklin, and Jefferson, have taken the place of Powhatan, Opechonecanough, and other red men, howsoever respectable they may have been as savages. Civilization, or extinction, has been the fate of all people who have found themselves in the track of the advancing Whites, and civilization, always the preference of the Whites, has been pressed as an object, while extinction has followed as a consequence of its resistance. The Black and the Red races have often felt their ameliorating influence. The Yellow race, next to themselves in the scale of mental and moral excellence, and in the beauty of form, once their superiors in the useful and elegant arts, and in learning, and still respectable though stationary; this race cannot fail to receive a new impulse from the approach of the Whites, improved so much since so many ages ago they left the western borders of Asia. The apparition of the van of the Caucasian race, rising upon them in the east after having left them on the west, and after having completed the circumnavigation of the globe, must wake up

and reanimate the torpid body of old Asia. Our position and policy will commend us to their hospitable reception: political considerations will aid the action of social and commercial influences. Pressed upon by the great Powers of Europe—the same that press upon us—they must in our approach see the advent of friends, not of foes—of benefactors, not of invaders. The moral and intellectual superiority of the White race will do the rest: and thus, the youngest people, and the newest land, will become the reviver and the regenerator of the oldest.

It is in this point of view, and as acting upon the social, political, and religious condition of Asia, and giving a new point of departure to her ancient civilization, that I look upon the settlement of the Columbia river by the van of the Caucasian race as the most momentous human event in the history of man since his dispersion over the face of the earth.

These are the values of the Columbia river and its valley—these the advantages of its settlement by us. They are great and grand, beneficial to ourselves, and to the human race, and amply sufficient to justify the United States in vindicating their title to the country, and maintaining its possession at all hazards. But I apprehend no hazard. The excitement in Great Britain was on account of the British settlements on Frazer's river, which our claim to 54° 40' included and menaced. That claim is now on its last legs. The myriads of good citizens who have been deluded into its belief, and who have no interest in being deceived, now abandon it as a sheer mistake. The Baltimore Convention, and the editors and orators who were so unfortunate as to stake the peace, and the honor, of their country on that error, and who had probably never read the Russian treaties of 1824 and 1825, nor the diplomatic correspondence of that time, nor ever heard of New Caledonia, nor taken it into their heads to consider whether continents were appurtenant to islands, or islands to continents: these editors and orators may still hang on to their old dream of fifty-four forty from mortified pride, and the consistency, not of judgment, but of vanity: they may still hold on to the shadowy phantom of their former love; but their power to involve their country in a war for a line which has no existence, and for a country that belongs to Great Britain as clearly as does Canada, is gone. They can no longer lead the country into war upon a mistake! and thus the war party at home may be said to be extinct. In Great Britain I see no desire for war except with those who have no power to make it, namely, the abolition fanatics, and the Hudson Bay traders. The former of these parties, uninstructed by the scenes of the San Domingo insurrection, and its effects upon the blacks as well as the whites of that island, would deem negro emancipation cheaply purchased in the United States by the slaughter of every man, the violation of every woman, the massacre of every child, and the conflagration of every dwelling in the whole slaveholding half of the Union: but, happily, these fanatics have no longer a French National Convention to organize their crimes; and speeches and votes must still be their arms instead of the knife and the torch.

The fur traders, now as always, are still ready for a war which gives them a little while longer the monopoly of beaver; but their power is not equal now to what it has been. They set the Indians upon us in the war of the Revolution, and in fact began the war at Point Pleasant (mouth of the Kenhawa) in October, 1774. They instigated and kept up the long Indian wars in the northwest, terminated at last by Wayne's victory under the guns of a British fort. One of the causes of the late war had its root in their love of beaver; and their savages, as in the war of the Revolution, fought the first battle in the bloody drama that was to follow. As an interlude, when not at war with us, they fought each other; and nothing in the long catalogue of Indian massacres can be more shocking than those perpetrated upon each other, through the instrumentality of savages, by the Hudson Bay and Northwest Companies; and all from the love of beaver. The act of Parliament which united these two companies under one charter, assigned it for a reason of the junction, in the face of the act, the necessity of joining them together to prevent their destruction of each other. This company would still find, in their opinion, judging from their past acts and present writings, a compensation for national war in their own further monopoly of beaver; but I see no sign of their success with the Government; and, for the rest, let them beware! The next war with Great Britain will leave them not a fort standing, from the Lake of the Woods to Hudson's Bay—from the Saskatchewan to Fort Chipewyan—from the mouth of Frazer's river to Bear lake. But they have no longer power to make war. After doing all they can to give that blessing to the two nations, they will probably set up for the innocent and injured party—demand indemnity for losses—claim the navigation of the Columbia—and require time to remove. I should be willing to be a negotiator for half an hour when they should come forward with such reclamations. I would remind them of something that might stand as a set-off, and that without going back to the war of the Revolution, the wars of the northwest, or the war of 1812. Leaving out old scores, and confining myself to the unsettled account which has grown up between us since the war of 1812, and the five hundred men killed on the Missouri and the Columbia, the five hundred thousand dollars worth of property plundered there—the thirty years' ravaging of all the fur regions in the valley of the Columbia under the reciprocity convention; which expelled our traders from our own territories instead of admitting them into the territories of the British: confining myself to these modern items, and I would soon find enough to silence the demand for indemnities, and rejecting the prayer for future favors. But, enough of this. There is no longer a party, either in the United States or Great Britain, which can make a war either upon a mistake, or upon fanaticism, or on beaver.

The treaty of settlement and limits will probably be concluded before the expiration of the twelve months which the abrogation of the convention requires: if not, the effect will be the same to us, though not to Great Britain. Under the first article of the Ghent treaty we shall receive the possession of the Columbia; and, as an incident of that

possession, as well as by the admission of Lord Castlereagh in 1818, we shall have the right to hold and govern it until the question of title is decided. This brings me to the practical question of providing for the establishment of government, and the administration of law, in the country which we claim. The President, in view of this question, and with due consideration of what we can do pending the convention, and what after its abrogation, and confining himself to the first class of these measures, has recommended five, namely, the notice—the extension of law and government to the American settlers to the same extent that the British Government has extended law and government to British settlers—the protection of the emigrants by a mounted regiment—block-houses on the way—a monthly mail. These are the measures recommended by the President. Four of them have been granted (for the mounted regiment will furnish the best mail-carriers;) one only remains, that of the temporary provision for the government of the settlers; and this might have been passed in as little time as it would have taken to read the bill three times, if presented in the form recommended by the President. He recommended an extension of our law to our settlers to the same extent that the British had extended it to theirs. This might have been done by the easy process of copying their act, with the modifications which would have adapted its application to our citizens; and by this means an adequate temporary Government would have been provided, with the advantage of being free from the possibility of objection, or cavil on the part of the British authorities.

The bill from the House is not a modified copy of the British act, and is therefore objectionable. It also provides for what is already done, and therein is objectionable again. A bill for the mounted regiment, and the chain of block-houses, for the protection of the emigrants, passed the Senate five months ago. Not being presented as a war regiment, for the conquest of the country up to 54° 40', it passed with so little notice, that the event seems to have been almost unobserved. It has lately passed the House of Representatives, and is now the law of the land; and if all the other measures recommended by the President had been brought forward in the same way, they would have passed as easily, and the whole five measures, notice and all, finished four or five months ago. But they were brought forward as war measures—war for "all or none"—clear up to 54° 40'. This was the cause of the delay, and the reason why one of the measures—that of the temporary government—remains unacted upon to this day. The provision in the bill from the House for the regiment and the block-houses, is, therefore, not merely unnecessary, but a work of supererogation—a sort of superfetation in legislation. Equally supererogatory, and absolutely impracticable, is the provision in the bill for the establishment of a monthly mail between Missouri and Oregon. Mails in an uninhabited country of more than two thousand five hundred miles, traversed by savages, and running over mountains of seven or eight thousand feet, where deep snow lies for more than a thousand miles more than one-half the year, could not be carried by the solitary conveyance of a contract-

or's man or boy. Four or five mounted riflemen, going together, and started from the different posts to relieve each other, alone could do it. In winter, they would have sleighs drawn by dogs, the reliefs always being ready at each post. The mounted regiment, already provided for in the Senate's bill, can render this service, costing nothing, and by the mere order of the President. No law is necessary about it. A non-commissioned officer and four or five men, relieved at each post, are the only practicable mail-carriers over such a line; and while carrying the mail, will also be in the line of their military duty, in looking out for danger, and giving assistance to travellers and emigrants.

In the land grants, the bill from the House is entirely deficient: it proposes three hundred and twenty acres to each settler. Now the bill which passed the Senate heretofore gave double that amount to each father of a family, and half that amount for each child under eighteen years of age, including the children born within five years after he went to the country, and also half that amount to the wife in her own right; and to all single men over eighteen years it also gave six hundred and forty acres. Such beneficial provisions as these, once sanctioned by the Senate, should not be given up without an effort to restore them.

The bill, therefore, now before the Senate, is, in some respects, unnecessary—in some, injurious—in some, deficient in justice to the settlers—and, in defining no boundaries for the territories to be occupied, is dangerous to the peace of the country, and commits the hazards of war to the collisions, accidental or designed, of Government agents, four thousand miles from the seat of Government. It confounds temporary and permanent measures, which should be kept distinct. A temporary government, to provide for the preservation of order and the administration of justice until the convention expires, is one want—a permanent territorial government is another; and, for the purpose of having these measures appropriately brought forward, and in a way to pass, I shall move to recommit the bill with instructions to bring in the temporary and the permanent measures separately: namely, a temporary extension of law to the extent recommended by the President, and a plan for a permanent territorial government, fully organized, to take effect the instant the present convention expires. These are my views. I would not mix temporary and permanent provisions: I would do nothing half way, or niggardly. At the termination of the present convention, I would take possession of the territory to the same extent that it was held by Mr. Astor—from the sea to the mountains—and take possession as an owner knowing its value, and determined to maintain it. A governor who should be both a statesman and a soldier, with an adequate salary, should be at its head; a distinguished general should be under him as the immediate commander of the military force, regulars and militia. A territorial legislature—superior and inferior courts of law and equity, and of admiralty jurisdiction—and a custom-house, should be established. A skilful engineer should be sent out to superintend the planning and construction of fortifications: a regiment of artillery should go to man the works. A navy-yard should be established

for the repair of vessels. The militia should be organized, and divided into classes, ready for service when called, to be compensated in land for holding themselves ready, and paid for their services when in the field. Mounted gun men, cavalry, and horse artillery, so well adapted to a country of plains and grass, should be relied on for field service against Indians, or any invader: artillery and infantry (regulars and militia) for the defence of posts and forts. A chain of posts on the commercial route of the Columbia and Missouri should be established. That route flanks the British establishments, and is open to the depredation of the northern Indians. Posts at the Oka-nag-an, and at the Upper Falls of the Columbia—in the valley of Clark's river—at the Great Falls of the Missouri, and at the mouth of the Yellow Stone, should be established. The protection of Government should be extended to both routes, the land line of travel through the South Pass, and the water line of commerce through the North Pass. This would keep the Indians in order on both routes, north and south, and speedily open direct communications with the Pacific ocean. In a word, I would prepare to take possession of the country (for its exclusive possession comes to us under the Ghent treaty, whether Great Britain treats now or not) on a scale commensurate to its importance and to our rank and power in the world. For this purpose I would have the bill recommitted, and the committee instructed to report separately the temporary measure for the preservation of order, and the permanent government for the territory, which I have sketched.

Mr. President, I have performed a painful duty—one from which I have long held back, hoping that events would correct the errors of the day, and free the country from danger. There was great danger of war with Great Britain when Congress met last fall, and all upon a mistake and a blunder. War speeches and war preparations were immediately commenced on this floor, and the people were inflamed up to the fighting point. I endeavored gently to quiet these dangerous movements—all to no purpose. At last, I felt it to be my duty to my country to speak out, and to let the people see that they had been led into great errors, and to the brink of war, by editors and orators, assuming to speak with great authority. I know the frailty and the vanity of poor human nature, and how hard it is for party leaders to admit a mistake which they have induced myriads of good men to adopt. The leaders are ashamed to retract: not so the mass of their followers. They have no interest in being deceived, and no petty vanity to be mortified at the retraction of error. They only wish for what is right and honorable, and with them truth prevails, and error passes away. For two years the people have been indoctrinated with a Russian line upon 54° 40', from the sea to the Rocky Mountains, the Russians owning all north, and we all south, and leaving no room for Great Britain between. Well! the treaties supposed to establish this boundary, and thus to cut out Great Britain, are produced, and they show that there is no such line—that the United States line with Russia is insular, and not continental; and that Russia, by treaty, admits the British title quite out to the Fro-

zen ocean, and covering the exact place where the boundary of 54° 40' was supposed to be established! The treaties show this; and their production is enough for those who have been deceived into the belief of a 54° 40' boundary. Again: for two years the people have been deluded into the belief that this 54° 40' was their true and rightful northern boundary! The Executive documents of 1823-'24 were produced; and they show that the statesmen who made the treaties supposed to give us this northern boundary, actually proposed it, at the time, over and over again, to Great Britain, as her northern boundary, coming down to 49 for quantity, and that, not upon a principle of compromise, but of right, to cover her settlements in the valley of Frazer's river; settlements well known to the statesmen of that day, however unknown to the brave fifty-four-forties of the present day. For two years the people have been told that every acre and every inch—every grain of sand, blade of grass, and drop of water, from 42 to 54 40, is ours. Geography, history, and the maps are produced, and show that Frazer's river flows from 55 to 49—discovered by the British in 1793—settled by them in 1806—covered from head to mouth with their settlements, and known by the Scottish name of New Caledonia when we negotiated with Spain in 1819: and then the Executive documents are produced, which show that this river and its settlements were admitted to be British property by Mr. Monroe's Administration, who no more set up a title to it under the Spanish treaty of 1819 than they set up a title to Canada under the same treaty. Yet our warlike fifty-four-forties opened the session with demands for ships and troops to fight Great Britain for this very Frazer's river! A demand which put her up to ships and troops on her side, until she saw that these intrepid invaders of New Caledonia would be set right at home. From that moment her war fever abated; the war fever of our valiant invaders abated also: they now cry war no more; and, to do them entire justice, I verily believe they had never heard of Frazer's river at the time they proposed to walk over it in their march to fifty-four forty. They are now peaceable enough; and all we have to regret is, the discredit which their want of acquaintance with our own treaties—want of acquaintance with our own documents—and want of acquaintance with our own geography, has brought upon us in the eyes of Europe and America.

The danger is passed. The language and conduct of Great Britain is pacific—perfectly so. She was a little ruffled at first; as who would not be at the menaced invasion of a province? But since she has seen that the invaders are brought to a stand at home, she seems to have recovered her good humor, and the Oregon question has nearly died out with her. Now, everybody is looking for a settlement of it on the basis of the old offers of 1807, 1818, 1823. These offers I digested into the form of two resolutions in 1828, in Executive session of the Senate, with a view, by their adoption, to prevent the ratification of the renewed joint occupation convention which we are now all so determined to get rid of. These resolutions have been read once to the Senate, but I will read them again, not to show my consistency, (for my ambi-

tion is to be right, and to get right by changing, when standing still becomes error;) but to choke the quibblers and garblers who mutilate and misapply my words, to get me into the same box they are in themselves. Sir, I came into the Senate before the fathers of the church had all left it, and when it was the custom of the young Senators to listen to the old ones, and not to throttle them; and when, I flatter myself, I learnt something; and, among other things, learnt that 49 was the proper boundary between our Columbia river and the British Frazer's river. Upon this knowledge I acted in drawing these resolutions eighteen years ago; and I have nothing to add, or to take from them, to-day.

"In Senate: secret Session: Tuesday, Feb. 5, 1828.

"MR. BENTON'S RESOLUTIONS.

"Resolved, That it is not expedient for the Government of the United States to treat with his Britannic Majesty, in reference to their territorial claims and boundaries west of the Rocky Mountains, upon the basis of a joint occupation by the citizens of the United States and subjects of Great Britain, of the country claimed by each Power.

"Resolved, That it is expedient for the Government of the United States to treat with his Britannic Majesty in reference to said claims and boundaries, upon the basis of a separation of interests, and the establishment of the 49th degree of north latitude as a permanent boundary between them, in the shortest possible time."

These resolutions were offered in secret session, as it was proper to offer them, but have long since been made public, with other proceedings on the ratification of the renewed joint-occupation convention in 1828. They are known to the leaders, if not to the followers of the fifty-four-forties, and would be appealed to by all who would wish to represent my opinions as they are, and not as they are not!

I have no personal interest in this matter. After long delay I have spoken publicly (for my opinions were never a secret) what my duty to my country required at my hands, and according to the knowledge which thirty years' study of the subject has given to me. I have been fighting the battle of Oregon for thirty years, and when it had but few friends, though now entirely eclipsed by the new converts. I am where I always have been, and rejoice to see the question coming to the conclusion which I have always deemed the right one. For my justification in making head against so much error, I throw myself upon the equity and intelligence of my countrymen; and, never having had any fear for myself, I now have none for my country.

Mr. BENTON then moved to recommit the bill to the Committee on Territories, amended on the motion of his colleague, [Mr. ARCHISON,] to recommit to the Judiciary Committee, with instructions to report as follows:

That the bill be recommitted to the Committee on the Judiciary, with instructions—

First. To bring in an amendment extending the jurisdiction and laws of the United States, civil and criminal, over the citizens of the United States in Oregon, to the same extent that Great Britain extended her jurisdiction and laws over her citizens in the same territory by the act of Parliament of July 2, 1821, and supplemental act.

Secondly. To report a bill for the full and perfect government of the territory, to take effect after the abrogation of the joint-use convention, providing for the appointment of a governor, to be the military and civil chief of the territory, and, *ex officio*, superintendent of Indian affairs; providing also

for a territorial legislature, and for the administration of justice; also providing for the defence of the territory by fortifying the mouth of the Columbia river, and other points, and organizing the militia; also for the conducting of commerce by establishing a collection district and custom-house in Oregon; also to provide for the security of navigation, by light-houses, buoys, beacons, &c., at the mouth of the Columbia. The boundaries of said territory to be such on the north as may be established by treaty with Great Britain; and until so established, to be along the parallel of 49° of north latitude.

APPENDIX

TO MR. BENTON'S SPEECH ON OREGON.

I.—NORTH AMERICAN ROAD TO INDIA.

Extracts from essays written and published at St. Louis, in 1819, by Thomas H. Benton.

OREGON.—ASIATIC COMMERCE.

COMMERCE WITH ASIA:—Sought after by all nations—Ancient channels of this commerce—Its modern channels—New route proposed for the people of the United States by the Columbia and Missouri rivers—Practicability of this route—Preference due to it, in shortness of distance; in safety; in cheapness of transportation; in substituting an exchange of commodities for a trade in gold and silver—Other advantages in rendering the commerce of the republic independent of Europe; in giving to the republic the command of the North Pacific ocean; in giving to the republic the monopoly of the East India trade—Effect of this monopoly on the wealth and power of the republic; on the wealth and power of England; on the wealth and power of Russia; on the religious and political condition of the people of Asia—Effect of the military expedition to the Upper Missouri in turning open the new route—Effect of an American Fur Company in turning the East India trade into the new route—Project of a fur company with a view to that object—Idea of the value and present condition of the fur trade in North America, as carried on by the English; by the Russians; by the Americans—Certain establishment of the new route, immediately, with the aid of the American Government, eventually, by the force of circumstances and the natural progress of events.

I. *Commerce with Asia.*—Spices, aromatics, precious stones, porcelains, cottons, silks, and teas, are the articles of Asiatic commerce. Silver and gold are the articles with which they are purchased. From the earliest ages of the world, the precious metals have flowed into Asia; and this drain, which has been incessant for several thousand years, has become still more enormous in later times. The Americans alone have carried twelve millions to eastern Asia within the last year, eight millions of which were carried to Canton, and exchanged for tea, silk, porcelain, and cottons. This course of trade has occasioned a prodigious accumulation of the precious metals in eastern Asia; for what is carried there remains there, there being nothing in the commercial or political relations of the countries to create a counter current, and bring it back into Europe or America. To stop this drain, and substitute for it a trade in barter, would be an object of the first interest with any country, especially with the United States, which have no mines to supply a drain so incessant and so enormous. To go further, to create a change which would draw back a part of the gold and silver which has accumulated in Asia, would be a commercial operation which no nation has yet accomplished, and which would open a vein of unrivalled richness. Both of these operations are practicable, not by the Europeans, who have nothing which they could substitute for silver, or by the Americans while they

follow the track of the people of Europe. Yet there are articles for which the Asiatics would not only give the rich productions of their country, but freely exchange their gold and silver, if brought into their market by any nation. These articles are FURS and BREAD. Of the former, Europe has none to send, of the latter but little; and if she had any to spare, her geographical position, the vast distance which intervenes, would prevent its exportation. America, on the contrary, abounds in both these articles—the first has been blindly abandoned to our enemies; the second has not been carried to Asia, because the Americans servilely follow the track of the Europeans, and are still more remote than they from the seat of commerce. The American navigator sails to the east, traverses 30,000 miles of sea, doubles a stormy and tempestuous cape, in order to arrive in what is called the East Indies. In the meantime, what was the EAST Indies to the ancients are the WEST Indies to the Americans; for they lie to the west of us, and but a few days' sail from our own coast. The western shore of North America and the eastern shore of Asia front each other—the mild and tranquil waves of the Pacific ocean alone intervene—in the broadest part as narrow as the Atlantic, and in the narrowest, at Behring's Straits, only thirty miles apart. Instead of going to the east, Americans should therefore go to the west, to arrive in Asia; and taking that route, they would immediately be able to carry furs and bread into the markets of Asia, the first of which is now pillaged from them by Englishmen and Russians, the latter would have to be raised from the fertile banks of the Columbia river.

II. *Sought after by all nations.*—During thirty centuries the nations of the earth have flocked to Asia in search of its rich commerce. Sacred and profane history exhibit the same picture, of merchants loaded with gold and silver, traversing the deserts on camels, or the trackless sea in ships in search of the rich productions of the east. From the time of the Phœnicians to the English of the present day, the countries of eastern Asia have been the chief theatres of commercial enterprise; and the nation which shared this commerce in the highest degree, has acquired in all ages the first rank in the arts, the sciences, in national power and individual wealth. And such will probably be the case to the end of the world. Nature has made but one Asia, but one country abounding with the rich productions which are found in the East Indies; and while mankind continue to love spices and aromatics, precious stones, porcelains, fine cottons, silks and teas, the trade with Asia must continue to be sought after as the brightest jewel in the diadem of commerce.

III. *Ancient channels of this commerce.*—These may be traced by the ruins of the great cities which grew up with the possession of this trade, and perished with its loss.

Tyre, "*Queen of Cities*," was its first emporium. The commerce of the east centered there before the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, upwards of six hundred years before the coming of Christ, (*Rollin*.) She traded to Arabia, Persia, and India. Her route was by the Mediterranean Sea to the coast of Egypt, over land to the Red Sea by the

Isthmus of Suez, down the Red Sea, and thence east by coasting voyages to the countries about the Gulf of Persia and mouths of the river Indus. The possession of this commerce made Tyre the richest and the proudest city in the universe; gave her the command of the seas; "*made her traffickers the honorables of the earth,*" (*Isaiah*), and enabled her merchants to dispute with kings in the splendor of their living and the vastness of their expenses. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, conquered Tyre, and razed it to its foundations; but he did not found a rival city, and the continuance of the India trade immediately restored the "*Queen of Cities*" to all her former degrees of power and pre-eminence. Alexander conquered her again, founded a rival city on the coast of Egypt, and Tyre became "a place for fishermen to dry their nets," (*Ezekiel*.)

The Jews, in the time of David and Solomon, succeeded to the India trade. Their route was the same which the Phenicians followed from Tyre, and their country became the theatre of wealth, and their kings the arbiters of surrounding nations.

In the reign of Darius Hystaspes, King of Persia, a new route was opened with India. It lay from the borders of Persia through the Caspian Sea, up the river Oxus to the mountains which divide it from the river Indus, across those mountains with the aid of the Bactrian camel, and thence down the river Indus to the countries about its mouth, then the chief seat of the India trade, and the limit of the ancients in their trade to the east. This route covered a distance of three thousand miles: six hundred on the Caspian Sea, nine hundred on the Oxus, two or three hundred overland crossing the mountains, and about twelve hundred on the river Indus.

The foundation of Alexandria created a new emporium, and opened a new route for the commerce of the east, chosen with so much judgment, that it continued to be followed from the time of Alexander the Great, upwards of 300 years before Christ, till the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope in the fifteenth century. This channel was along the canal of Alexandria to the Nile, up the Nile to Cop-tus, thence across the desert with camels to the Red Sea, and thence a coasting voyage to the mouths of the Indus. The Romans, in the flourishing times of the republic and of the empire, derived their supplies of India goods through this channel.

In the same age another channel was opened with India. It lay overland, across the desert, from the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea to the river Euphrates, down that river to the Gulf of Persia, and thence by the usual coasting voyage to the mouths of the Indus. The distance between the sea and the Euphrates (two hundred miles) required a station between them. It was found in a grove of palm trees; a fertile spot, well watered, in the midst of sands, about midway between the sea and the river. Its inhabitants entered with ardor into the trade of conveying commodities from the river to the sea. As the most valuable productions of India, brought up the Euphrates from the Persian Gulf, were of such small bulk as to bear the expense of a long land carriage, this trade soon became so considerable that the opulence and power

of Palmyra increased rapidly. (*Robertson*.) Its government was best suited to the genius of a commercial city—REPUBLICAN. (*Pliny the Elder*.) This spot then began to exhibit the wonders of which commerce is capable. From a trading station, it became an opulent city, the capital of a great empire, the seat of science and the arts, the rival of Rome. Rome would bear no rival. One of the most powerful of the emperors (Aurelian) carried the arms of the empire against the "*City of Commerce*." Palmyra was subdued; its trade diverted to other channels; and the ruins of temples arrest the admiration of the traveller on the spot which was once the seat of so much power and magnificence. (*Volney*.)

After the conquest of Egypt by the Mahomedans, the people of the Roman empire were shut out from the port of Alexandria. This gave rise to the opening of a new channel for the India trade. Constantinople became its emporium. This route lay through the Black Sea to the mouth of the river Phasis; up that river and by a land carriage of five days to the river Cyrus, down it to the Caspian Sea; across this sea three hundred miles, to the mouth of the river Oxus; up that river nine hundred miles, to the city of Marcanda, now Samarcand; thence across the mountains to the countries upon the river Indus, or eastward by a journey of eighty or a hundred days, with the Bactrian camel, through desert countries and warring nations which considered the merchant as their prey, to the western provinces of the Chinese empire, (*Pliny the Elder*.) This route, though long and perilous, made Constantinople the emporium of the India trade for all Christian nations for several centuries after the conquest of Egypt by the Mahomedans, and made it the seat of wealth and power for many ages after the downfall of the Roman empire.

IV. *Modern channels.*—Constantinople continued to be the emporium of the India trade till the fifteenth century. The Venetians and Genoese engaged in it. They established trading houses in Constantinople, and rose to power and pre-eminence from the profits of this trade. Their fleets commanded the seas, at a time when fleets were yet unknown to the rest of Europe, and the citizens of these republics displayed a magnificence in their living which surpassed the state of the greatest monarchs beyond the Alps, (*Robertson*.) From Venice and Genoa the commerce of Asia spread into the north of Europe. Bruges and Antwerp became its *emporia*, and retain to this day evident signs of the wealth and splendor to which they attained. This was the longest and most perilous route over which the commerce of India has been conducted. It is truly astonishing to think of it. From Bruges and Antwerp to Genoa and Venice, thence to Constantinople, across the Black Sea, across the Caspian Sea, up the river Oxus to Samarcand, the limit of Alexander's march towards the northeast of Asia; and at Samarcand it seemed that the journey was only beginning, as there commenced the voyage overland with the Bactrian camel, through desert regions and nations of robbers, to be continued from eighty to a hundred days to arrive in the western provinces of China, where the most valuable productions of the East

were then found. Yet so great were the profits of the trade, that, under all these disadvantages, the cities of Constantinople, of Venice, and Genoa, of Bruges and Antwerp, become the seats of learning and refinement, of luxury and magnificence, of maritime and military power, when all other parts of Europe were sunk in poverty and ignorance, darkness and barbarism.

Towards the end of the 15th century, the Cape of Good Hope was doubled. A new route was then opened into India. The Portuguese, who made this discovery, became the masters of the India trade, destroyed the fleets of the Turks and Venetians which were launched upon the Red Sea to keep open the ancient channel through Egypt, and established a commercial empire in India. Portugal then became one of the most powerful nations by sea and land, and Lisbon the centre of European wealth and commerce.

The passage by the Cape of Good Hope (sometimes by Cape Horn) has since continued to be the route of India.

The Portuguese did not long retain their monopolies. The Dutch became their competitors, and soon after their successor in the India trade. Portugal declined to its original insignificance. Holland rose to wealth and power by sea and land, and Amsterdam became the principal mart of Europe.

The English followed the Dutch, and have surpassed all their predecessors in the successful prosecution of the India trade. A company of their merchants have erected an empire in India, maintained fleets and armies, subjugated vast empires, dethroned powerful monarchs, disposed of kingdoms and principalities as other merchants dispose of bales of merchandise; and with the riches thence derived, England (a spot no larger than one of our States) has been able to contend single-handed against the combined powers of Europe, to triumph over them, and to impress her policy, more or less, upon every quarter of the globe.

One other route, among the modern channels of India commerce, remains to be mentioned. It is the line followed by the Russians from the city of Moscow to the frontiers of China. By this route the Russians carry on a trade with China worth three or four millions of dollars per annum, in which the productions of the respective countries are bartered against each other, almost the only instance of trade by barter which any nation has carried on with the people of the East, but sufficient to show that there are articles for which the Chinese will barter the rich productions of their country. This route is often made entirely over land, and is then upwards of six thousand miles in length; sometimes by the river Wolga, the Caspian Sea, and the river Oxus, and thence over land by the ancient route from Constantinople, which increases the distance but relieves in some degree the labor of the voyage by substituting for a part of the way water for land carriage.

Servilely following the Europeans in almost everything, the people of the United States also follow them in their route to India. They quit Asia as it were, leave it behind them, to sail thirty thousand miles, doubling a formidable cape and braving the dangers of a tempestuous sea, to

arrive in a country which is only a few days' sail from their own continent. They do this because the people of Europe, who can do no better, have done so before them. In the meantime the efforts of the English to discover a northwest passage to Asia, should convince them that even the Europeans would not submit to circumnavigate the globe in their voyage to India, if a western route could be found through, or around, the northern parts of the American continent. Still, with all the dangers added to the length of the voyage, the East India trade is the richest vein of American commerce, and soonest leads to the most splendid fortunes; convincing proof of what it would be if a new route was opened, exclusively American, short, safe, cheap, and direct, and substituting a trade in barter for the present ruinous drain of gold and silver.

V. New route proposed for the people of the United States by the Columbia and Missouri rivers.—Columbus was the first who conceived the idea of going west to arrive at the East Indies. His discovery of America was owing to that idea. He was in search of a western passage to the eastern coast of Asia when he was arrested by the unexpected intervention of the American continent. Nor had he any idea that he had found a new world. He believed himself on the coast of India, and under that belief gave the name of Indians to the inhabitants; a name which they have retained ever since, although the error on which it was founded has been long since exploded. (Robertson.)

La Salle, founder of the French colony in the valley of the Mississippi—a man pronounced by Mr. Adams to be second only to Columbus in the list of great discoverers—was the next who cherished the idea of going west to India. The French were then masters of the Canadas, and were daily extending their discoveries to the interior of North America. The existence of a chain of great lakes stretching westward being ascertained, he believed that an inland passage to China might be discovered by means of these lakes and the rivers flowing from them to the Pacific ocean. (Stoddart.) Full of this idea, he left Montreal about the year 1680, in the hope of immortalizing himself by opening to his country a new and direct route to the commerce of the East Indies. Parting from his friends eight miles above Montreal, the last word he said to them was China, and the spot retains the name (*La Chine*) ever since. But death arrested him in the valley of the Arkansas, the fate which Columbus had so narrowly escaped, that of being assassinated by his own followers, who had not courage to follow him any further.

The English, of all others the most avaricious of the India trade, also turned their views to the discovery of a western passage to Asia. A passage round the American continent above Hudson's Bay, was for a long time a favorite object with the English government, and still occupies its attention. Numerous squadrons have been fitted out, and repeatedly attempted the passage, sometimes from the northwest by Behring's Straits, sometimes by the northeast through Hudson's Bay and Davis's Straits. The multiplied efforts to discover this passage show the value which the English place on the discovery of a direct route to

Asia. But they have not confined themselves to sea voyages. Taking up the idea of La Salle, they have sought an inland passage by means of rivers and lakes. This project was entrusted to McKenzie. Confined to the northern parts of our continent, he could only prosecute his discoveries north of the heads of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. He was confined to high northern latitudes, but succeeded in showing the existence of a water communication, with a few portages, from Hudson's Bay, north latitude 55 to the Pacific ocean in the north latitude 46. The Mississippi, the Peace river, the Columbia, and some lakes, formed the means of this communication, and little useful as it would seem to us in a latitude so high, it was deemed a discovery of great moment by the English. McKenzie received the honor of knighthood for his enterprise; the British fur traders immediately began to export their furs to China by the direct route of the Columbia, and the privilege of navigating that river for ten years has been secured to them by treaty.

The Missouri above upon the Mandan villages was yet unknown. From the mouth of the Mississippi a man of genius projected its discovery. In 1796 the Baron de Carondelet, governor general of Louisiana, planned an expedition to the sources of the Missouri and thence to the Pacific ocean. He obtained the approbation of Charles IV, King of Spain. A liberal compensation was offered by the King, and the Baron announced an additional reward of three thousand dollars to the persons who should first see the great ocean. The expedition was undertaken by Don Jacques Clamorgan, an enterprising citizen of St. Louis, who prosecuted it some distance up the Missouri at great expense, but without accomplishing the views of the Spanish Government.

A few years after, Louisiana changed its master. The eyes of Mr. Jefferson, taking the direction of so many eminent men, were turned upon the Pacific ocean, and under his auspices the labors of Lewis and Clark have demonstrated the existence of a water communication, with a few portages, through the heart and centre of the Republic from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The rivers Columbia, Missouri, and Ohio, form this line, and open a channel to Asia, short, direct, safe, cheap, and exclusively American, which invites the enterprise of American citizens, and promises to them a splendid participation in the commerce of the East.

VI. *Practicability of this route.*—The new route will consist of four parts:—1. A sea voyage across the North Pacific ocean. 2. A river navigation up the Columbia. 3. A land carriage across the Rocky Mountains. 4. A river navigation descending the Missouri.

II.—HARBOR AT THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA.

Letter from Senator Benton to James Blair, Esq., United States Navy.

WASHINGTON CITY, March 30, 1846.

DEAR SIR: I have understood that you were one of the officers of the late Exploring Expedition under Captain Wilkes, who made the survey of

the mouth of the Columbia river; Messrs. Knox and Reynolds, who are not now in this city, being the other two; and that you were upwards of two months engaged in that work. If so, I should suppose that yourself, and the two gentlemen named, must be better acquainted with the mouth of that river than any other persons in the world; and desiring to have the best information in relation to the place, I address myself to you alone, in the absence of Messrs. Knox and Reynolds, for the fullest account which you can give me of it, with all its defects and capabilities as a harbor for vessels of war or commerce, such as it is now in a state of nature, and such as it may be in the hands of a maritime power, and with all the advantages of beacons, buoys, lights, pilots, and steam tow-boats. The character of the coast about it, whether high or low land—the character of the channels, bars, and breakers—depth of water on the bar, and also on the inside and outside of the bar—distance across the bar, and the length of time to cross it, coming in and going out—the currents, winds, and tides—temperature of the air, summer and winter—capacity of the port as to the number of vessels it can receive—its security from winds—its defensibility against enemies—its proximity to the sea—the points, if any, outside of the harbor to shelter, or hide an enemy's fleet blockading the port, or waylaying its commerce—with all other information necessary to a complete knowledge of the place as a good or bad port, and as being capable or not capable of being made safer and better. I wish you to give me, if possible, the full result of your experience and observations during the whole time you were employed in the survey, with the facts and circumstances which justify your opinions, and which I may rely on in any use which I may choose to make of your statements.

Very respectfully, sir, your friend,
THOMAS H. BENTON.
JAMES BLAIR, Esq., U. S. N.

James Blair to Thomas H. Benton.

WASHINGTON, April 2, 1846.

SIR: I answer your inquiries of the 30th ultimo. I regret that neither Lieutenants Knox or Reynolds are in the city, for information from them would be more satisfactory to you. They are both senior to myself; and the first being directly charged with, and responsible for, the service, in which I cooperated, a statement from him particularly would have been much greater authority than anything from me. Yet I venture to say that it would be precisely the same in import, however in other respects more satisfactory.

Lieutenant Knox, commander of the Flying Fish, conducted and completed the survey with great ability, sharing equally with Lieutenant Reynolds and myself the drudgery of sounding out the harbor, channels, and bar.

The accompanying chart will show you how faithfully the work was performed—every spot in the bed of the river having its depth ascertained. The diagram will explain how easily the river may be entered by ranges of landmarks, and without the compass. The only difficulty in entering the

harbor of the Columbia, is the strength of the currents. They vary from five to three miles an hour, according to the time of the tide, and differing in several parts of the channel. When the water is low, and confined to the channels, the currents are very strong; but as the river rises the tide sweeps in over the middle sands, and are much moderated.

During the two months and a half we were engaged in the Flying Fish upon this survey, from August to November, we had ample opportunity to observe the effect of all weathers upon the bar and channels. In heavy weather the bar is dangerous, but not more so than any other bar, with the same depth of water and in like situation. The channels are very much protected by the north and south breakers, upon which the sea breaks, leaving the channels comparatively smooth, and when the sea is running highest, the more completely is it broken upon these breakwaters. If the bar and channels were buoyed out, there would be no necessity for pilots. Four-and-a-half fathoms is the least water found on the bar at any time. This is sufficient water for frigates and the largest merchantmen, even with a large swell running.

There is as much water on this bar as through the famous Gedney Channel into the harbor of New York. In a state as it is now, it is far preferable to that on many accounts—especially on the proximity of safe anchorage to the sea, which the bold shores of the river, the high land, and the heavy timber, cover from the storm.

Lieutenant Knox discovered the south channel, (which renders the entrance into the river much more direct and easy,) when, upon a reconnaissance of the work to be performed, he observed and concluded that such a vast body of water as swept between the great middle sands and the southern shore must create a deep channel. He pulled through it in a boat, and followed shortly afterwards with the schooner drawing nine feet water. This channel is a straight chute, and, taking the direct course of the *dead tree* landmark with the remoter one on Young's Point, [Cockscorn Hill,] you enter the river on a straight line; never having less than four and a half fathoms water, and a width of from three-quarters to one-third of a mile. There is no difficulty in entering even against the ebb tide, if the ship has a six-knot breeze. Three knots are sufficient to keep the range on with the flood tide.

The wind is free for this channel to enter, when from any point of the compass west of north and south. Through the channel the tide is so strong that a small vessel can beat through it with the tide against the wind, and a large one can back and fill through when the sea is not high. I passed in and out of the river, in the schooner and boats, from thirty to forty times, and was never in any danger, except when venturing upon the breakers or the middle sands. Lieutenant Knox would sometimes club through the south channel in a calm, merely using his anchor to sheer from one side of the channel to the other, as the occasion required. If Sir Edward Belcher, of the English navy, knew this channel, he kept it to himself, as he did all the information he had obtained while here. This was ingratitude, unless the result of obedience to positive orders from the Admiralty;

for the Peacock assisted him, when unfortunate, in the Fejee Islands, and Captain Hudson's want of information was the immediate cause of the loss of his ship; yet this disaster might have been avoided, if the precaution of feeling our way in had been adopted.

While the Peacock was going to pieces on the north breaker, Lieutenant Knox, in the schooner Flying Fish, felt his way with the lead over the bar, and was about to anchor near Cape Disappointment, and would easily thence have entered the river, but was ordered to sea again by signal from the Peacock. After the discovery of the south channel, we used it or the north as served best for the occasion. You can see, by inspecting the accompanying chart, that the north channel (which seems to have been the only channel known, or at least used, until Knox's discovery of the south channel) has two elbows, and it is, besides, subject to strong cross tides. It is, however, deeper and wider than the south channel. All things considered, I think the south channel preferable for entering, and the north for leaving the river, with the prevailing northwest sea breeze. This sea breeze generally prevails throughout the year, in all clear weather, from about eleven o'clock A. M. until sunset. There was, during the season we were on the Northwest coast, much more clear weather than I have ever experienced on the East coast of the United States at the same season of the year, and a milder climate at all seasons.

You will perceive, by inspecting the diagram, that the Northwest sea-breeze is a leading wind in through the south, and a leading wind out through the north channel.

In answer to your inquiries of the depth of water on the bar, I reply that the mean depth is about five fathoms: in and outside of it, six and a half fathoms: distance across it, half a mile. When the current of the river combines with the tide, the water flows out of the river five miles an hour; the current against the flood tide nearly neutralize each other. Mean rise of the tide, about six feet.

The winds prevail from the north, northwest, and west, and moderate during the summer; during the winter, from west to southeast, and stormy. Temperature of the air, as mild as that of Europe, in the same latitudes, during the same seasons. Security from winds as good as any harbor that I have ever been in of the same size.

Its defensibility perfectly easy by those in possession of both the Cape and Point Adams. From the cape you can command the North and the Chinook channels, by a raking fire for two and a half miles, whether in approaching or receding from the cape, after passing it. Every ship is obliged to pass at the nearest point within musket shot. You have the same command of the South and Clatsop channels from Point Adams; and here ships are obliged to pass within a half to three-quarters of a mile, and may be subjected to a raking fire in the approach and in receding, after passing. Even the temporary occupation of the middle sands with heavy ordnance holds perfect control of the passage up the river. A secure harbor may be reached in Baker's Bay, or near the Clatsop shore, within Point Adams, within three and a half miles of the open sea. Frequently, in

twenty minutes after weighing the anchor, we have been out at sea. We were about this time coming out when the squadron (the Porpoise, Oregon, and Flying Fish) left the river.

Shoal Water Bay, to the northward, is the only shelter near the Columbia river, and that only for small vessels; for the entrance to it is shoal and intricate.

The harbor of the Columbia river, as a seaport, is inferior to none, except Newport, on the east coast of the United States, in point of security from winds, defensibility, proximity to the sea, or capacity as a harbor for vessels of war or commerce.

In the hands of a maritime Power, with all the advantages of pilots, buoys, lights, and steam tow-boats, it will be found one of the best harbors in the world.

In addition to my own experience and observation, (the results of which are found in the notes of the survey, and marked on the chart,) I obtained much information, confirming my opinion, from Mr. Birney, commanding at Fort George, formerly called Astoria.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,
JAMES BLAIR,

Passed Midshipman U. S. N.

HON. THOMAS H. BENTON,
United States Senate.

Mr. Maginn's statement and opinion.

Mr. John Maginn, of the city of New York, and, since the year 1823, a regular licensed pilot in the harbor of that city, now President of the Association of Pilots in New York, and at present in the city of Washington as the agent of the State pilots in their application to Congress, being requested by Senator Benton to examine the chart of the mouth of the Columbia, in the Library of Congress, as made upon surveys and soundings by officers under Captain Wilkes, and to compare the same with a chart of the harbor of New York, and to give my opinion of the comparative merits of the two harbors, do hereby state and declare—

That I have made such comparison accordingly, and find that the mouth of the Columbia is the better harbor, and has manifest advantages over the harbor of New York, in all the essential points which constitute a good harbor. It has deeper water on the bar, having four and a half fathoms, without the addition of tide, which is there said to be eight feet, while the New York harbor has on the bar but four fathoms, without the addition of the tide, which is six feet. The bar in the Columbia is half a mile across, while that of New York is about three quarters of a mile. The channel on the bar, in the mouth of the Columbia, is about six thousand feet wide at the narrowest, and twelve thousand feet at the widest, and then shoals gradually on each side; while the channel on the bar off Sandy Hook is but about six hundred feet and shoals rapidly. The channel across the bar is straight at the Columbia; that of New York is crooked. As soon as the bar is crossed in the Columbia two channels present themselves, one

the south, or new channel, discovered by Captain Wilkes's officers, who made the soundings, entirely straight, and deep enough for ships of the line: the other, the north, or old channel, being crooked, or rather forming an elbow, and deep enough for any ships after crossing the bar. Both these channels are from six to twelve thousand feet wide or more, and free from shoals; while the New York channels, after crossing the bar, are narrow and crooked, and beset with shoals, which require many changes of courses in the ship. In accessibility to the sea the Columbia is far the best, as it is immediately at the sea, and ships can get out of the sea into the harbor at once, and also get out at once into the high sea, and thus more easily elude cruisers in time of war. A great number of good and safe anchorages are found in the Columbia as soon as the ship enters, and room enough for thousands of vessels, and deep enough for ships of the line.

The bar and banks of the mouth of the Columbia are all of hard sand, and therefore not liable to shift, and being free from rocks are less dangerous. The land on each side of the mouth of the Columbia, is high, and makes a marked opening into the sea, and confines all the water of the river to one outlet, and, therefore, would seem to be easy of defence. There seem to be no points, islands, or bays off the mouth of the Columbia to shelter enemies' cruisers while lying in wait to capture vessels going in, or coming out; while the New York harbor presents such shelter for an enemy. The winds at the mouth of the Columbia are marked *regular* and *steady*, blowing six months one way, and six months another; while the winds at New York are entirely variable, and cannot be calculated upon by the mariner for any time. The mouth of the Columbia is free from ice, and also from great heat, the temperature never falling below the freezing point, nor rising above the summer warmth. The current of the river is said to be strong, but I cannot see that it offers any serious obstacle. The breakers on each side of the channel are also represented to be very great; but with a channel so wide, and a bar so narrow, and free from rocks and shoals, these would be nothing to experienced mariners. Taking the mouth of the Columbia as it now is, in a state of nature, without the aid of pilots, buoys, beacons, light houses, and steam tow-boats, I deem it a good harbor: with the aid of these advantages, I would deem it a far better harbor than New York, and capable of containing an unlimited number of ships. In fact, I have never seen so large a river, with its water all so well enclosed by bold shores at its mouth, and making so commodious a bay, large enough to hold any number of ships, and at the same time small enough to be easily defended, and where there were more anchoring and sheltering places for ships, and where they could be close up to bold shores, and be better under the protection of forts and batteries.

JNO. MAGINN.

WASHINGTON CITY, April 26, 1846.

